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December 2019

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WATER COLOUR

The French spa town where Saint-Saëns took the waters and played the organ

► see page 68

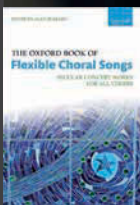
DOBRINKA TABAKOVA

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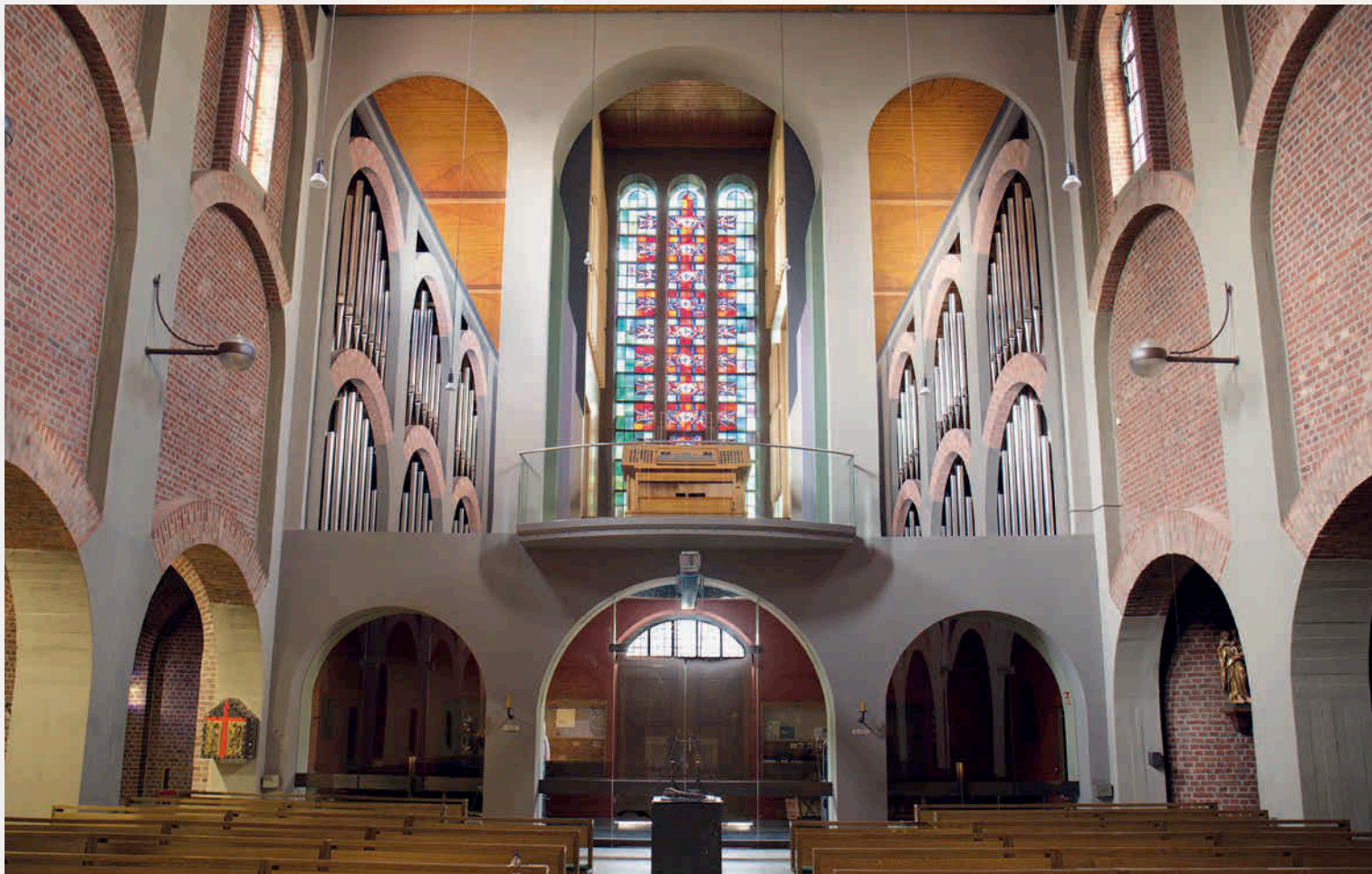
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SCHNITGER REIMAGINED
Recreating a lost organ by the baroque builder

FOR WHAT THEY'RE WORTH
How a choral project affirms Roma children's identity





Düsseldorf (GER) Robert Schumann University

2019

Hauptwerk	I.	C - c4	Positiv (expr.)	II.	C - c4	Récit (expr.)	III.	C - c4	Pedal	C - g1
Principal		16'	Bourdon		16'	Cor de Chamois		16'	Untersatz	32'
Principal		8'	Principal		8'	Bourdon		8'	Principal	16'
Gedackt		8'	Holzgedackt		8'	Flûte		8'	Subbass	16'
Flûte harm.		8'	Salicional		8'	Viole		8'	Principal	8'
Viola da Gamba		8'	Unda maris		8'	Aeoline		8'	Gedackt	8'
Octave		4'	Prestant		4'	Voix céleste		8'	Cello	8'
Blockflöte		4'	Rohrflöte		4'	Principal		4'	Flöte	4'
Quinte		2 2/3'	Sesquialtera	II	2 2/3'	Fugara		4'	Bombarde	16'
Superoctave		2'	Doublette		2'	Flûte trav.		4'	Fagott	16'
Mixtur major	V	2'	Larigot		1 1/3'	Nazard		2 2/3'	Posaune	8'
Mixtur minor	IV -V 1	1 1/3'	Scharff	IV	1'	Octavin		2'	Klarine	4'
Cornet	V	8'	Krummhorn		8'	Tierce		1 3/5'		
Trompete		16'	Klarinette		8'	Piccolo		1'		
Trompete		8'	Tremulant			Fourniture	III-V	2 2/3'		
						Basson		16'		
						Trompette harm.		8'		
						Hautbois		8'		
						Clairon harm.		4'		
						Voix humaine		8'		
						Tremolo				

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Hearing voices

It's a pity Hitler didn't live longer. It is a shock even to see these words in print; I certainly never thought to be reading them in *Choir & Organ*. They reflect a deeply disturbing rise in hostility towards minority groups as the right wing in Europe grows more confident and outspoken.

On this particular occasion they were spoken in relation to a Romani children's choir, Čhavorenge (see feature, p.54), who earlier this year had captivated classical music industry professionals with their singing at the opening of the conference of the Association of British Orchestras. The choir, which is based in the Czech Republic, was founded by the visionary Ida Kellarová, a trained cellist and pianist whose own father – a Roma – had nurtured her musical talent. In response to what she describes as the 'stifling racism and hatred' that began to surface in the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution of 1989, she founded MIRET, a charity that challenges the general public's preconceptions of the Romani by fostering a better knowledge and appreciation of Roma culture, as well as supporting Roma children and young people. Out of a series of summer camps run for Roma and non-Roma children, Čhavorenge was born, and its vibrancy of performance led to a partnership with the Czech Philharmonic. Crucially, Kellarová understands that different cultures are equally valid, and that what is important is to integrate, not assimilate – that integration does not mean the loss of self and identity, but rather enriches the whole with a variety that opens horizons, builds mutual respect, and lays the groundwork for cooperation and peace.



Ida Kellarová intuitively understood that making music can be a creative and potent way to respond to injustice and racism. Another is Alison Willis, a former New Music composer with whom we catch up in this issue (see p.36). In two of her recent works, Willis responded to the experiences of two women from another persecuted minority. *Non omnis moriar* ('Not all of me will die') set the best-known poem of the Polish Jew Zuzanna

Ginczanka (pen name Sara Ginsburg), who was executed in 1945; and *Do not stand at my grave and weep* – which strikes a chord at many a funeral service today – was written by Mary Elizabeth Frye in response to the inability of the Jewish Margaret Schwarzkopf, who was staying with her in Baltimore, to visit her sick mother in Germany before she died. Willis contends that 'people should have a voice', and that vocal music 'sometimes makes it possible to give people that voice.'

In their own unique ways, Kellarová and Willis join countless others, both today and those who have gone before, in a worldwide movement of protest – not in the commonly used sense of the word, of protesting *against* something, but in its etymological sense: 'pro testare', or speaking out *for* something. As xenophobic voices are emboldened and tensions mutate across our planet, these other voices for justice and humanity must be raised and heard; for, as Martin Luther King Jr said, 'For evil to succeed, all it needs is for good men to do [and say] nothing.'

Maggie Hamilton

Choir & Organ shines a global spotlight on two distinctive fields of creativity, celebrating inventiveness and excellence in all their forms.

We aim to inspire our readers through giving a platform to conductors, organists, composers, and choirs of every kind; and by showcasing the imaginative craft of pipe organ building across the centuries, critiquing new organs and tackling ethics in restoring historic instruments.

Specialist writers appraise new editions and recordings of standard repertoire and works fresh from the composer's pen, while our news and previews chart the latest developments in a changing world and present opportunities to become involved.

Choir & Organ is an invitation to engage with two unique areas of music – to explore the new, and look afresh at the familiar.

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BBC Singers



St Paul's Cathedral

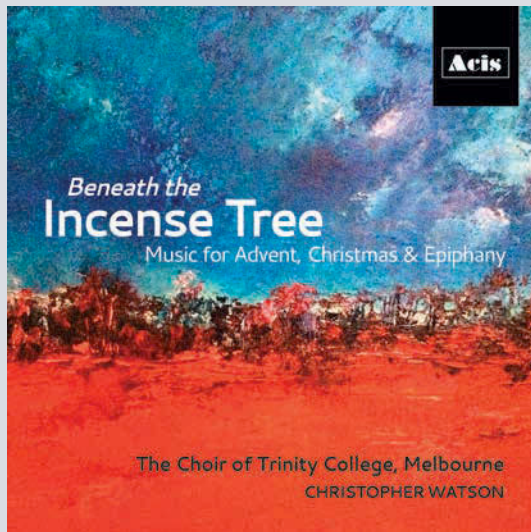


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TRINITY COLLEGE, MELBOURNE Beneath the Incense Tree: Music for Advent, Christmas & Epiphany

Former Tallis Scholar, **CHRIS WATSON** has shaped a beautiful album from Trinity College, Melbourne, with a mixture of new and old works.

(Dan Locklair, Francis Pott, William Mathias, Lachlan McDonald, Peter Campbell, Anthony Piccolo, Owen Elsley, Johannes Brahms, June Nixon, Michael Leighton Jones, Daniel Riley, Will Todd, Daniel Brinsmead, Johann Sebastian Bach, Malcolm Williamson, Richard Allain, Johann Pachelbel.)

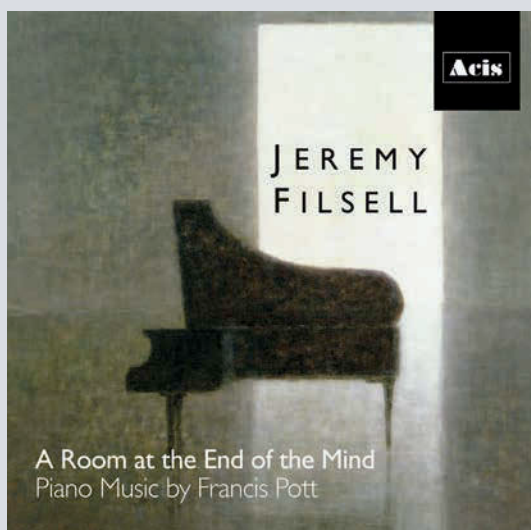
Features Daniel Riley's new arrangement of *Coventry Carol*.



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(David Chase, Judith Clurman, Sheldon Harnick, Jeremiah Klarman, Mikhail Lermontov, Ryan Nowlin, Trude Rittmann, David Shire, Jonathan Tunick)

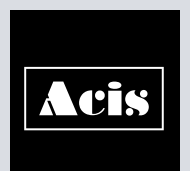


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Gramophone, November 2019



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COVER PHOTOGRAPH © SUSSIE AHLBURG

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ORGAN COMPETITION OPEN



COURTESY ST CUTHBERT'S CHURCH

▲ St Cuthbert's versatile four-manual organ, built in 1899 by Robert Hope-Jones

ENTRIES FOR THE IAO-RCO ORGAN PLAYING COMPETITION 2020 are now open. The competition – for organists aged 18-26 – will be held in St Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh, during the IAO Music Festival 2020.

A 1st prize of £1,000 is on offer, with 2nd and 3rd prizes of £500 and £200 respectively. Prize-winners will also be

offered recital opportunities at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, the University of Edinburgh, St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, and at a future RCO event.

Organists who are between 18 and 26 on 1 July 2020 are invited to apply by sending a recording of 7-10 minutes, which must include one of J.S. Bach's trio movements. Six competitors will then be chosen by

a panel of adjudicators to participate in the semi-final at St Cuthbert's on 25 July; repertoire will include a work by Louis Vierne, marking his 150th anniversary in 2020. Three competitors will be chosen to go through to the final on 26 July.

St Cuthbert's has a versatile four-manual organ, built in 1899 by Robert Hope-Jones; it has since undergone a restoration by Hill, Norman & Beard (1928) and a rebuild by J.W. Walker & Sons (1956-57), who also undertook a major reconstruction in 1997-98, which concept now prevails.

The competition – a joint endeavour of the Incorporated Association of Organists (IAO) and the Royal College of Organists (RCO) – was first held in Peterborough in 2018. The 2020 event will be under the artistic direction of RCO and IAO presidents Gerard Brooks and John Kitchen, who are joined on the jury by Naji Hakim.

Kitchen told *C&O*, 'Competitions provide an important focus and opportunity for musicians, so I would encourage any ambitious young organist to take part in 2020. I am looking forward immensely to hearing for myself the quality and breadth of talent that comes forward.'

Deadline: 29 February 2020.

iao.org.uk; rco.org.uk

COMPOSITION SUBMISSIONS OPEN

JAM'S 20TH CALL FOR MUSIC IS NOW OPEN, inviting submissions for choir, brass quintet and organ, or a combination of all of these forces.

Entrants who are successful will have their music performed and professionally recorded in JAM's 2020 launch concert at St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, London on 19 March 2020. The submissions will be performed alongside previous JAM commissions by Paul Mealer, Julian Philips and Daniel Saleeb, with performers including the Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge and Simon Hogan (organ).

In 2020, JAM will celebrate 20 years of commitment to new music in the UK, through commissioning music and calling new composers to submit their music to it. JAM receives thousands of submissions each year, with past entrants including Mealer, who responded to the call for music in 2002. Previous commissions from Jonathan Dove, Judith Bingham and Gabriel Jackson have won or been shortlisted in the British Composer Awards.

Entrants must be 18 or over and be born, living, or studying in the UK. The full submission criteria can be found at jamconcert.org.

Deadline: Thursday 19 December at 5pm.

▼ Successful submissions are to be performed by Selwyn College Choir



SARAH MACDONALD

CAROL COMPETITION WINNER

BEAU IMAGES AND PHOTOGRAPHY



▲ The Bach Choir will perform *A Spotless Rose* at their 'Carols at Cadogan' concert on 18 December

THE WINNER OF THE SIR DAVID WILLCOCKS CAROL COMPETITION 2019 has been announced as Aaron King, with his carol *A Spotless Rose*.

King is a composer based in Gloucestershire, having studied music at Hertford College, Oxford and directed Hertford College Chapel Choir and the Oxford University String Ensemble. His choral music has been performed across the UK and abroad, most recently at Truro Cathedral by the Luceat Choir. On winning the carol competition, King said that he is 'thrilled and honoured to have been chosen.'

Reflecting on the jury's decision, David Hill said, 'Aaron's carol is very well crafted with a strong sense of melody and rich harmony. It's a movingly gentle setting of the words and a very deserving winner of the competition.' The text used is an 1869 translation by Catherine Winkworth of the traditional 15th-century German carol, in which the rose is symbolic of the Virgin Mary.

Now in its third year, the Sir David Willcocks Carol Competition is run by The Bach Choir and invited original carols for adult SATB choir, with or without organ accompaniment, from composers of any age, although entries were judged in two age categories, over and under 18. The closing date for submissions was 11 October.

The entries were judged by Bach Choir musical director David Hill and president John Rutter, and Sir David's son, Jonathan Willcocks.

Following on from the tradition of competitions held during Sir David's time as the choir's musical director, the carol competition brings new music to the UK every Christmas. Previous winners include former BBC Young Composer of the Year Alex Woolf (2017), and King's College London graduate Ruth Sellar (2018).

A Spotless Rose will be performed by The Bach Choir at its 'Carols at Cadogan' concert (7.30pm, Wednesday 18 December, Cadogan Hall, London). thebachchoir.org.uk

IN BRIEF

The Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) has announced a **new choral conducting course**. Aimed at those working in music education or training to do so, the course will be led by Stuart Overington, conductor of the RNCM Chamber Choir and Symphony Chorus, and the Hallé's Youth and Community Choirs director, in partnership with the Hallé and the new Choral Leadership Network. Participants will gain practical experience conducting the Hallé Youth Choir as part of the course, as well as the chance to bring their own choir to the Hallé's new education area at St Peter's in Manchester. rncm.ac.uk

The Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) has announced that **Rosemary Field** is to be the new Head of Organ Studies from January 2020. Field will continue with her role as director of RSCM Voices South and a consultant role with RSCM safeguarding, but will step down from being a deputy director of RSCM at the end of 2019. rscm.org.uk

Choral charity **Sing for Pleasure** has confirmed the four scholarship recipients on its Young Conductors Programme for 2019/20: Gina Baker, a freelance musician and Birmingham Conservatoire BMus (Voice) graduate; Sarah Batten, a specialist music teacher currently studying part-time for a Masters in Music Education; Tristan Weymes, a former organ scholar and bass scholar, studying for a music degree at Trinity College, Oxford; and Clover Willis, a music graduate and former choral scholar at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge. The four scholars began their tuition on 2 November, and will work toward SFP's Advanced Level accreditation, conducting complex a cappella and orchestrally accompanied works, with an option to take the LRS in Choral Directing. singforpleasure.org.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

abcd

INSPIRING CHORAL LEADERSHIP

Autumn Initial Course

Oct-Feb, Newcastle

Tutors include Liz Garnett and Tom Leech. One-day observers are still welcome at the remaining sessions of this foundation course in January and February.

Singing day with Will Todd

8 Feb, Fulwood, Preston

Will Todd returns to the North West region for a singing day to inspire and introduce attendees to singing jazz. Music will include some of Todd's latest works including *Passion Music* and *Jazz Missa Brevis*.

Spring Initial Course

Mar-Jul, The Hall School, London

This course consists of four one-day sessions and is designed to lay firm foundations for anyone who has an interest in learning to lead singing of any kind, or who has recently started to conduct a choir. Tutors include Lucy Griffiths and Mark Jordan.

Emerging/Progressive Course

Mar-Sep, St Gabriel's Halls, London

This joint course is run at two levels: the Emerging Course consists of four one-day sessions plus a weekend and is designed for those with experience in singing and/or conducting to develop existing skills. The Progressive Course consists of three one-day sessions and two weekends and is for those who work with at least one choir on a regular basis and wish to develop their technique further.

For details of all events, including online booking where applicable, and general information about **abcd**, visit abcd.org.uk

FROM AUCKLAND TO QATAR



PATRICIA LECHE

▲ Canada's Hamilton Children's Choir will join choirs from across the globe to perform at the Symposium

REGISTRATION FOR THE 12TH WORLD SYMPOSIUM ON CHORAL MUSIC (WSCM) opens in January 2020.

From 11-18 July 2020, Auckland, New Zealand will welcome 24 world-class choirs and over 40 choral practitioners to the Symposium.

Choirs from across the globe have been selected to perform out of an unprecedented number of applicants, with those successful including Collegium Musicale (Estonia), Hamilton Children's Choir (Canada), Ensemble Vocale Limburg (Germany), Houston Chamber Choir (US), and the National Youth Choir of Great Britain (UK).

Working around the theme of 'People and the Land', the selected international presenters will host workshops, masterclasses and demonstrations on a variety of topics, including conducting, vocal technique, intonation and programming.

John Rosser, artistic director of the Auckland symposium, commented, 'We felt that this theme was relevant to us all in some way, while also containing a certain amount of tension – the stuff of lively programming. Those applying rose magnificently to the challenge and presented us with a wide range of creative takes on the theme.'

The International Federation of Choral Music's (IFCM) flagship event, which takes place every three years, is considered one of the world's most prestigious non-competitive choral events. It was first held in 1987 and has since welcomed choirs, choristers, conductors, presenters and composers to cities around the world, including Barcelona, Seoul, Copenhagen, Kyoto, Sydney, Vancouver and Vienna.

It was announced in October that Qatar has won the bid to host the 2023 event, in which the musical heritage of the Middle East and Central Asia will be explored.

wscm2020.com; ifcm.net

FESTIVITIES IN LONDON

SEB FRICHOT



▲ The Christmas line-up features the London Choral Sinfonia, who include Britten in their repertoire

THE 34TH CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL at St John's Smith Square, London, opens on 8 December with a run of 17 concerts throughout the month.

Curated by artistic director Stephen Layton, festivities begin with sacred music of the Italian renaissance from The Cardinal's Musick, followed by Marc-Antoine Charpentier's *Pastorale sur la naissance de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ* performed by Solomon's Knot on 9 December.

Making a return to the festival are the choirs of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, King's College, London, and Clare College, Cambridge, presenting a selection of choral works from Poulenc to Roderick Williams.

Also returning are Ex Cathedra and the Tallis Scholars, who present a programme of 'Reflections' on different settings of the same text. The London Choral Sinfonia end their programme with Britten's *Saint Nicolas*,

while Vox Luminis and Gabrieli bring elements of the baroque to the festival with Handel and Bach.

On 19 December, David Titterington (organ) performs Messiaen's *La nativité du Seigneur*; La Nuova Musica perform Bach's Magnificat the following day. The festival closes with a pair of concerts directed by Stephen Layton, showcasing Handel's *Messiah* performed by Polyphony, and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, both accompanied by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

St John's Smith Square director Richard Heason told C&O: 'For many London concert-goers, their Christmas would be incomplete without a visit to the baroque splendour of St John's to hear trumpets and drums, organ and voices unite in a rich variety of Christmas musical treasures.' sjss.org.uk

IN BRIEF

The **Gloria Dei Cantores** choir, based in Orleans, Massachusetts, and their conductor emeritus Elizabeth Patterson have been awarded The American Prize in recognition of their promotion of US music.

The third **Sursa American Organ Competition** took place on 6-8 Sep at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana. The competitors played the three-manual Goulding & Wood Opus 45 at the University's School of Music. The winner of the pre-professional division was Josiah Hamill, who will perform Poulenc's *Organ*



▲ Competition winners receive their applause

Concerto with the Muncie Symphony Orchestra on 4 Apr 2020. In second place was Jihye Choi, and third prize went to Yong Zhang. All three winners are students at Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University, Bloomington. Daniel Colander won the high school division, with Rebecca Lee taking second place. The judges for the live final were Wilma Jensen, James Kibbie and Mark Herris.

The **National Youth Choirs of Great Britain** (NYCGB) has appointed three new principal conductors, who will be responsible for overseeing the strategic planning and delivery of three of NYCGB's five UK choirs: Lucy Joy Morris (National Youth Boys' Choir of Great Britain), Joanna Tomlinson (National Youth Girls' Choir of Great Britain), and Greg Beardsell (National Youth Training Choir of Great Britain). nycgb.org.uk



A Forster & Andrews organ was relocated from Scotland to Yorkshire in October. The 14-stop instrument, built in 1893, had been housed in Borthwick Parish Church, to the south-east of Edinburgh. With the closing of the church, the organ was removed and installed in St Anthony's, Beeston, Leeds. The National Pipe Organ Register describes the instrument as 'an outstanding organ which incorporates fine pipe decoration and unusual mechanical and pneumatic stop control.' The work was undertaken by David Wood of Huddersfield, with consultant Dr John Rowntree.

COURTESY BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

COURTESY JOHN ROWNTREE

EVENTS

James Lancelot has been invited back to the Philharmonie in Essen to give a seasonal recital on 23 Dec. The programme will comprise J.S. Bach's chorale preludes *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland*, BWV 599 and BWV 699, alongside Messiaen's *La nativité du Seigneur*. Lancelot last played the Philharmonie's Kuhn instrument in April 2018, as one of 10 recitalists performing the complete organ works of J.S. Bach in a series of one-hour concerts from 10am to 9.30pm. Lancelot told C&O: 'The organ is designed with a definite French flavour in terms of both stoplist and sounds, and I am looking forward very much to being able to realise Messiaen's tone-colours on it.'

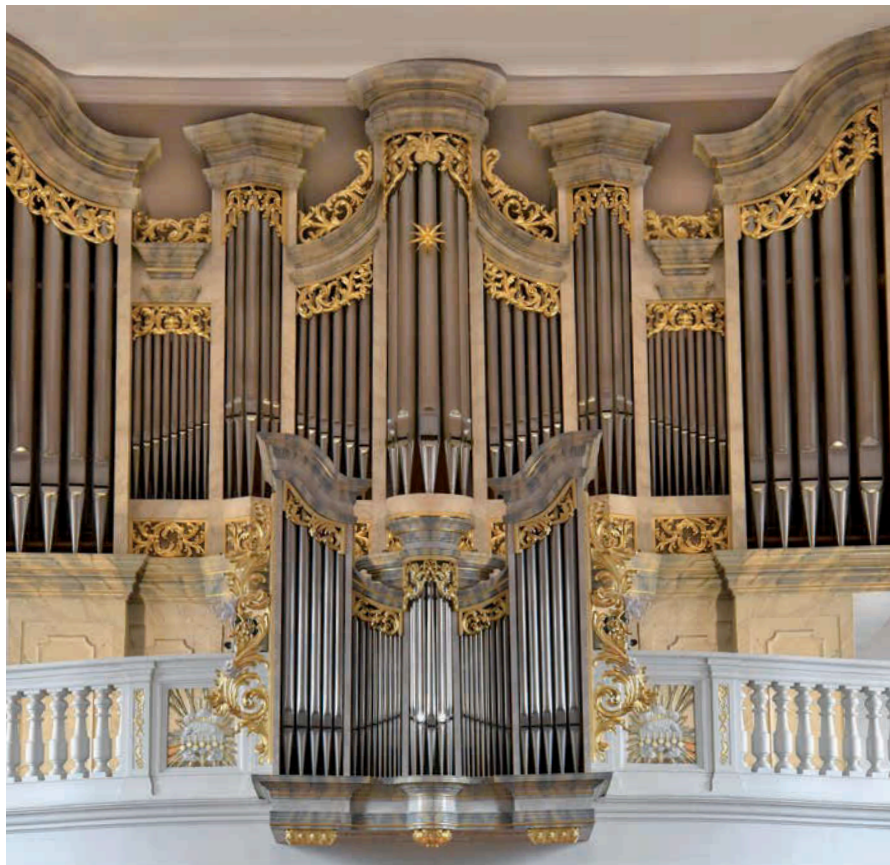
The German spa town of Baden-Baden hosts choirs and orchestras for the 9th International **Badenia Advent Music Festival** (5-8 Dec). Participating groups will each perform a programme of Advent or Christmas music lasting 30-45 mins, and join together for the Festival Concert. The event also includes visits to Strasbourg and the Black Forest. bit.ly/36lWJ5t

Prague is the venue for **youngbohemia ADVENT 2019** on 5-8 Dec. This is the first edition of a new choral event in the Czech capital, and brings together children's choirs, youth choirs and youth adult choirs for an international festival and competition; non-competing choirs are also welcome. All participating choirs present themselves with a traditional song from their country, and perform in venues around the city. The Festival ends with an evening closing ceremony with the awarding of the prizes. Contact +49 228 28986011, info@musicultur.com. bit.ly/2C2mee0



C&O

CALL FOR ORGAN COMPOSITIONS



COURTESY FÖRDERERIN KLINGENDE KIRCHE

▲ Entries must be composed specifically for the mechanical-action Mayer organ in the Saarlouis-Lisdorf church

THE 9TH INTERNATIONAL ORGAN COMPOSITION CONTEST in Saarlouis-Lisdorf, Germany, has been announced for 2020. The competition calls for submissions specifically arranged for the mechanical-action Mayer organ (1987) in the Catholic Parish Church of Saarlouis-Lisdorf.

Organised by the Friends' Association of the Klingende Kirche, the City of Saarlouis and the Diocese of Trier, the competition invites entries of compositions 8-10 minutes long for organ and any solo instrument or organ, solo instrument and solo voice; the pieces must not have been premiered or published before the end of the competition.

Chaired by Dr Thomas Daniel Schlee from Vienna, the international jury will award a first prize of €2,000, as well as a recording of the work by a German broadcasting company and a premiere performance of the piece at the 2020

Saarlouis Organ Festival. Second prize will be €1,000 and the composer in third position will be awarded €500.

The chairman of the Friends' Association, Manfred Bossmann, told C&O, 'We want to make sure that our organ is once again in the public's musical eye. The amazingly large number of previously submitted compositions confirms our constant efforts to give the beautiful instrument a special status even in today's fast-paced world.'

Over the past eight competitions, the contest has received over 600 entries from participants from 41 countries. The 8th Competition took place in 2017, with first prize going to the Italian organist Pier Damiano Peretti for his work for organ and mezzo-soprano. Previous first prize winners are not eligible for entry to the 2020 contest. For further terms and conditions, visit klingende-kirche.de.

Closing date: 31 March 2020

FIGHTING HOMELESSNESS

CHOIRS AROUND THE UK ARE RAISING FUNDS for homeless charity Crisis through performances of a Christmas carol, *Ring the Bells*. The initiator of the project, the London Philharmonic Choir (LPC), has been calling on others to take on the carol, resulting in over 50 choirs (to date) signing up, with a total of 60 performances scheduled this Christmas.

Ring the Bells was composed by Paul Fincham for the LPC in 2017, and premiered at the Royal Albert Hall under Toby Purser.

The first performance this year, in Cambridge on Sunday 1 December by Out of the Shadows choir, is followed by a UK-wide schedule of performances, including by the choir of Fincham's old college, Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, on Friday 6 December. Each choir will raise money either for Crisis or a local homeless shelter through collections at their event. In addition, royalties from the sound file performed by the LPC, released as a download on the London Philharmonic Orchestra's label [LPOD 911] on 29 November, will be donated to Crisis, as will royalties from the sheet music; scores can be purchased from Boosey & Hawkes at bit.ly/2WwcS3N.

Those answering the LPC's call include cathedral, school and chamber choirs, as well as some of the UK's leading choruses, such as the London Symphony Chorus and the Hallé Choir.

LPC chair Tessa Bartley told *C&O*, 'We're overwhelmed by the support we've received from the choral community for this project ... we already have choirs committed to performing *Ring the Bells* in 2020 and Crisis will continue to benefit from royalties for years to come.'

The London Philharmonic Orchestra also works with the charity, holding an annual week-long music workshop with Crisis members, which culminated this year in a free concert on Saturday 9 November.

Crisis works with people on the streets to bring them out of homelessness through providing education, as well as support with housing, health and employment; CEO Jon Sparkes has reported that the number of people sleeping rough in the UK has grown by 150 per cent in the last 10 years.

Bartley commented, 'I'm so inspired by the work that Crisis does; I wanted to use my skills and the power of music to reach more people with their vision to end homelessness.'

lpc.org.uk; crisis.org.uk

▼ *Ring the Bells* will be performed in Christmas concerts around the country to raise money for homelessness



EVENTS



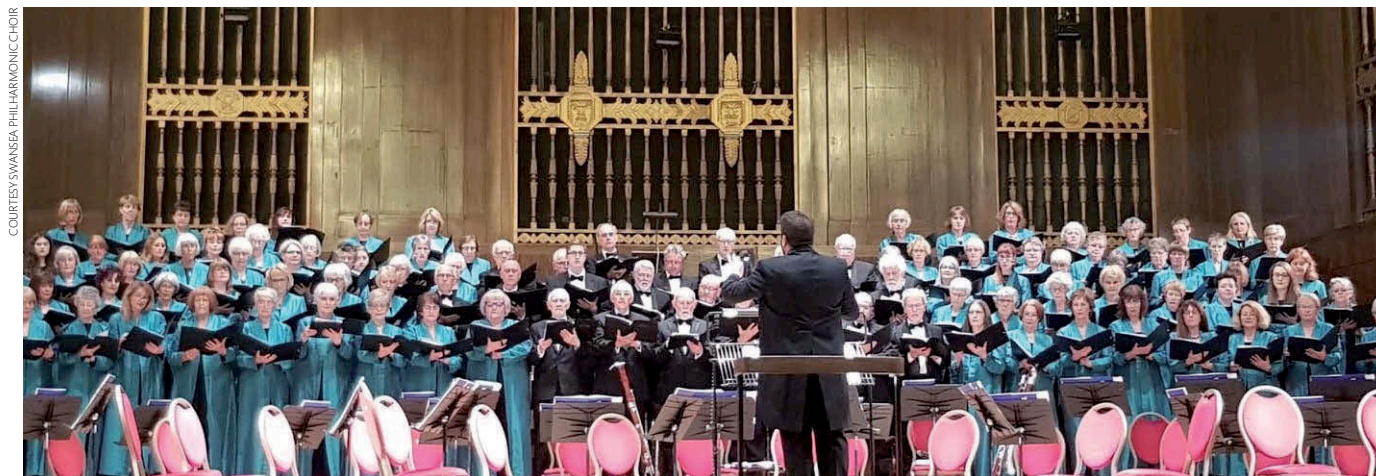
LEON HARGREAVES, KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

On 24 Dec, **Daniel Hyde** conducts his first Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols at King's College, Cambridge. It will be broadcast live on BBC Radio 4 and repeated on Radio 3 on Christmas Day, as well as at various times on the BBC World Service. On 8 Nov, the College released a commemorative album *A Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols: The Centenary Service* – the final Christmas service, in 2018, under the musical direction of Sir Stephen Cleobury. kings.cam.ac.uk

John Scott Whiteley leads a class on the organ music of J.S. Bach – and in particular, his writing for pedals – at Manchester Cathedral on Saturday 7 Dec from 2-5pm. **Bach's Feet** is open to those at a playing level of Grade 5 to diploma; participants should bring pieces with them, especially those with pedal solos. The event is organised by the Royal College of Organists; fees: £47 member; £57 non-member; £25 observer place, member; £35 observer place, non-member. Bookings at 020 3865 6998, bookings@rco.org.uk or online at rco.org.uk/events/bachs-feet

Choirs from around the world will meet in the Austrian capital each weekend from 28 Nov to Christmas for the **International Advent Singing Festival Vienna 2019**. The participating choirs will perform at four different concert venues: Vienna City Hall, a church (during a church or Mass service), a Senior Citizen Home and the outdoor Christmas Market. The event is organised by MusiCultur Travel. Details from +49 228 28986011, info@musicultur.com, bit.ly/2PzeOqR.

DIAMOND JUBILEE



COURTESY SWANSEA PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

▲ Swansea Philharmonic Choir has chosen Bach and a newly-commissioned piece by Nathan Dearden to celebrate its 60th anniversary on 8 December

SWANSEA PHILHARMONIC CHOIR WILL CELEBRATE 60 YEARS of singing with an anniversary concert on 8 December, which includes the premiere of Welsh composer-conductor Nathan Dearden's *3 Postcards*.

The concert, which takes place at 7.30pm at the Brangwyn Hall in Swansea, marks 60 years since the formation of the choir in 1959. Performing a wide repertoire of choral music, from baroque to 21st-century works, this year the choir has been paired with Dearden as part of Making Music's 'Adopt a Composer' scheme, which matches amateur choirs, bands, orchestras and ensembles with a composer for a year.

Dearden has had previous commissions and performances from the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Genesis Sixteen and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, as well as for C&O's New Music series in May/June 2017, for which he composed *The Bright Morning-Star*.

Speaking of his composition, Dearden told C&O, '[With its] being

the choir's 60th anniversary and Swansea celebrating 50 years of city status, we really wanted to create a love letter, or even a "postcard" for Swansea. [We were] trying to encapsulate what makes the area and its people so special, so culturally rich and open.'

Dearden has worked with the poetry of local poet Rebecca Lowe, exploring the themes around what 'home' means for the city's residents, as well as with a choir member's response to the hymn *Calon Lân*, which originates from the Swansea area. The third influence on the text of *3 Postcards* is a reaction to Dylan Thomas's 1947 broadcast 'Return Journey', about the devastation in Swansea during the second world war.

Under the direction of Jonathan Rogers, alongside *3 Postcards* Swansea Philharmonic Choir will perform Bach's B minor Mass with the British Sinfonietta and soloists Daisy Walford, Kieron-Connor Valentine, Gareth Treseder and Michael Lafferty.

Tickets range from £15 to £20 and can be booked online at brangwyn.co.uk.swanseaphilchoir.org

PREMIERES [RP = REGIONAL PREMIERE]

Judith Weir: Ave maris stella

Choir of St Mary the Virgin/Munro
1 Dec, Church of St Mary the Virgin, Dover, UK

Alexander Campkin: Ring out, O Bells

Choir of Trinity College Cambridge/Layton
1 Dec, Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge, UK

Nico Muhly: Puer pacis (The Dulwich Peace Carol)

Choir of Dulwich College/Mayo
6 Dec, Southwark Cathedral, London, UK

Kim André Arnesen: Nordic Christmas

VocalEssence/Brunelle
7 Dec, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church,
Apple Valley, MN, US

Detlev Glanert: Requiem for Hieronymus Bosch [RP]

BBC Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, BBC
Singers/Buchkov
7 Dec, Barbican Centre, London, UK

Nathan James Dearden: 3 postcards

Swansea Philharmonic Choir/Rogers
8 Dec, Brangwyn Hall, Swansea, UK

Alexander Campkin: Angels from the Realms of Glory

Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford/Grahl
10 Dec, St John's, Smith Square, London, UK

Cecilia McDowall: Lo! He slumbers in his manger

St Albans Choral Society/Vass
14 Dec, Marlborough Rd Methodist Church,
St Albans, UK

Alison Willis: Gold and Spices

Reading Phoenix Choir/Hann
14 Dec, Reading Minster, Berkshire, UK

Alexander Levine: Sicut Cervus

Ensemble Perspectives/Heurard
20 Dec, Christuskirche, Paris, FR

Alexander Levine: Christ's Nativity

Cathedral Choral Society/Fox
21 Dec, Washington National Cathedral,
Washington D.C., US

Owen Elsley: A Lady That Was So Fair And Bright [RP]

Lachlan McDonald: *Gabriel's Message* [RP]
Saint Louis Chamber Chorus/Barnes
22 Dec, St Louis Abbey, St Louis, MO, US

Please email items for News and Letters to the Editor for publication in future issues to maggie.hamilton@markallengroup.com, or post to The Editor, Choir & Organ, Mark Allen Group, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB, UK.



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‘Well-tailored restraint’

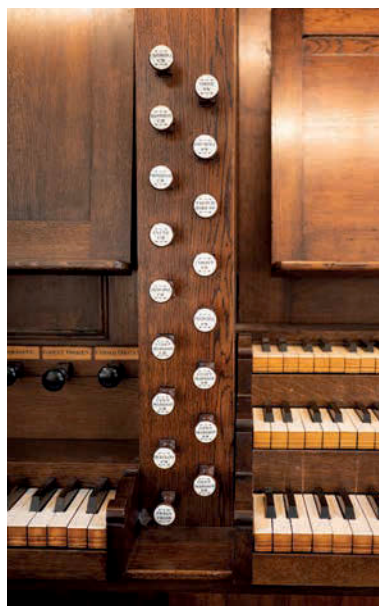
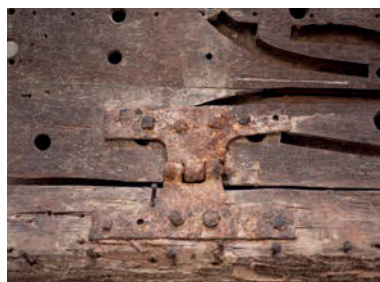
Following the success of its *Maximum Reger* documentary, Fugue State Films has turned its attention to producing a comprehensive history of the English organ, a project ten years in the making. **Graeme Kay** talked to producer Will Fraser and presenter-performer Daniel Moulton. ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF FUGUE STATE FILMS

‘As a title, *The English Organ* is rather unassuming,’ says Will Fraser, producer-director of a series of blockbusting (and habitually awards-garlanded) DVD productions including *The Art of Fugue*, *The Genius of Cavaillé-Coll*, *Franck: Father of the Organ Symphony*, and *Pronkjuwelen in Stad in Ommeland* (a history of the historic pipe organs in the Dutch province of Groningen). ‘As we discover, well-tailored restraint is one of the hallmarks of the English organ and its music. But there is nothing restrained about this set of films and recordings.’

Indeed not. Fraser filmed the 4-DVD (plus 3-CD) box set over the course of more than a year, visiting 40 locations on three continents, to create a sequence

of three feature-length documentaries – ‘The Long Beginning’, ‘The Victorian Boom’ and ‘Modernity and Nostalgia’ – which form the heart of the project. From a dauntingly extensive long-list, some 33 instruments were finally selected (see p.19) to illustrate the narrative, from the small, mass-produced ‘Scudamore’ organ, via churches, cathedrals, concert halls and educational establishments to the biggest instrument in the world at its time – the 1890 Hill organ in Sydney Town Hall. ‘To tell this story,’ Fraser continues, ‘we needed someone with both superlative musicianship, able to play the most demanding music and effortlessly move from one historical style to another, plus the ability to engage with an audience and transmit passion and knowledge of this far-reaching and

▲ Every organ tells a story: the 1934 Harrison & Harrison organ in the chapel of King’s College, Cambridge, includes some of the original casework by Thomas Dallam (1605-06), 18th-century gilding on the front pipes, and pipework by William Hill from the 19th century



◀ absorbing subject to the viewer. Daniel Moulton is that rare talent, and he brings this project to life.'

London-based Moulton, who heads the organ department at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, has history with Fugue State Films (FSF) – in 2000, he and Fraser collaborated on another signature DVD+CD package which paved the way for the latest magnum opus: *The Elusive English Organ* traced the development of the English pipe organ from 1550 to 1830, looking at why so few pre-1830 English organs survive, and to what extent it is possible to perform repertoire written during this period on instruments from the composers' times. 'We thought it would be wonderful to expand the brief and tell the whole story of the English organ and its culture, and the music, from Elizabethan times to the present day,' says Moulton.

FSF's in-depth productions make no concessions to the often blinkered editorial focus and rigid commissioning structures of linear broadcast TV, so

there are no upfront cash injections to draw on; but in a multi-platform world, the company has reached out and tapped an audience with not just an eagerness to discover and enjoy the films and CDs, but also a willingness to put its hand in its pocket and participate in FSF's successful crowdfunding schemes; each project can only progress when the production funds have been secured, or at least guaranteed. It comes as no surprise, then, that the English Organ project has taken ten years to realise. Not least of the challenges was drawing up the roster of organs.

'There were several instruments which, with a heavy heart, we didn't end up visiting because either the story was told elsewhere or in some case the instruments were not in the best condition,' admits Moul. 'That's a painful thing, because artistically you want everything to sound at its absolute best; but we still felt it was important to maintain the integrity of the project, to stick to the chronology, and tell the story. In terms of significant instruments, the likes of Willis and Hill for example, there was serious competition, and yes, the choices were extremely difficult.'

The production aims to celebrate the development of the English organ and relate it to the broader narrative of English history

The most noticeable omission in the production is the ground-breaking Harrison organ in the Royal Festival Hall, designed by Ralph Downes, but apparently this was not for the want of trying by both the producer and the organ's curator, William McVicker, who appears alongside Nicholas Thistlethwaite and Dominic Gwynn as one of the many experts interviewed in the films. 'Notwithstanding,' comments Moul, 'we have the Walker organ of Brompton Oratory, Downes's "home" church, which was built in 1954 and is a further representation of his thinking; and of course it speaks into much more generous acoustics...'

The production's stated ambition is to celebrate the arc and development of the English organ and relate it to the broader narrative of English history. 'Like any cultural or technological artefact, the organ represents its time and the people who built it,' declares Fraser. 'Therefore at least two strands of story appear, one musical and the other social, both interrelated. Organs were affected by the events that drove along the history of England such as the Reformation, civil war, industrialisation, gain and loss of empire, wealth

and prestige, the rise of democracy, popular culture and stable material plenitude, and the yearning for the apparently grander or simpler life that went before. In fact, the organ and its music give a startlingly vivid portrait of the English quest for, and retreat from, their identity.'

Throughout the film, Fraser's contextual shots and visual cutaways, and Moul's engaging pieces-to-camera and encounters with experts such as Paul Binski, professor of the History of Medieval Art at Cambridge (with sidelines in royal and ecclesiastical patronage, and the art of liturgy and death), ensure that this aspect of the brief is fulfilled. As well as Dominic Gwynn, organ builders have their say, too, with Bruce Buchanan, formerly of the Austin Organ Company, Andrew Caskie of Nicholson & Co, and

◀ (opposite, top) William Drake's organ (1999) for St Mary Undercroft, Palace of Westminster, is based on a woodcut illustration by Augustus Welby Pugin; (opposite, far left) The original Wetheringsett Tudor soundboard, discovered by John Hurdley and now in the Royal College of Music Museum; (opposite, right) The Bishop organ (1829) at St James's, Bermondsey, with its extra keyboard to the side

▼ Presenter Daniel Moul is a 'rare talent' who brings the project to life



THE ENGLISH ORGAN

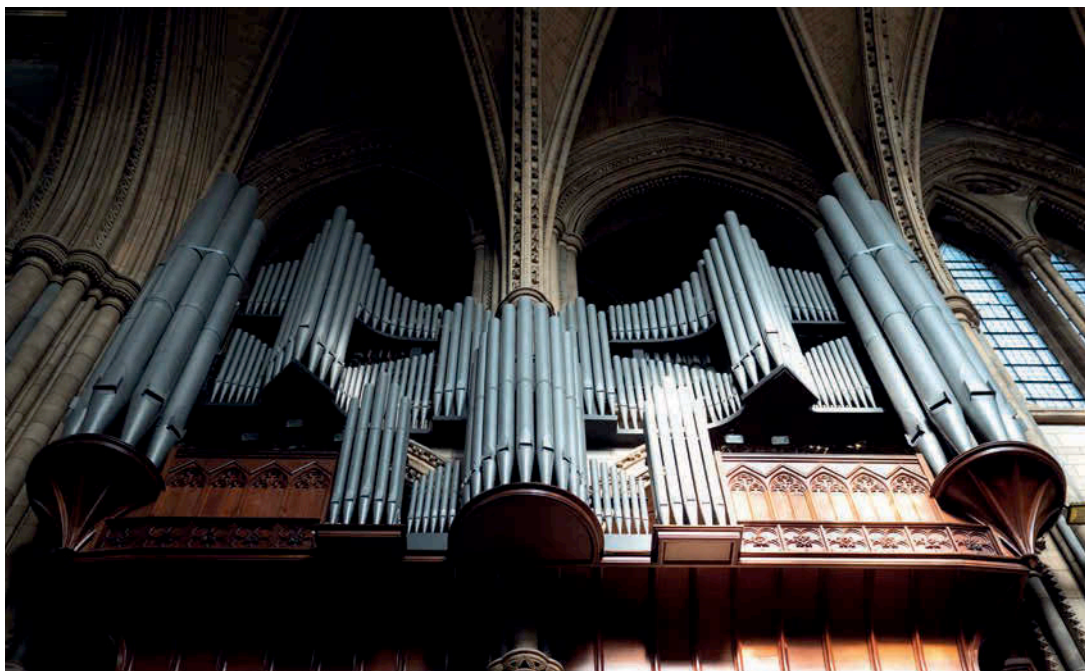
◁ David Wyld of Henry Willis & Sons adding historical perspectives from the standpoint of today's legatees of England's organ patrimony.

The chronology begins with the Wetheringsett organ, the Tudor organ constructed by Goetze & Gwynn, and based on a soundboard – discovered during alterations to a Suffolk farmhouse – which may have been recycled as the door to a dairy. By contrast with the uninterrupted continuity of organ building found in continental Europe, the lacuna of the English Reformation and its aftermath pushes the timeline forward to the unknown builder of Adlington Hall's 1680 instrument, and the English organ's own

renaissance, signposted by Renatus Harris's instrument at St Botolph, Aldgate, and Richard Bridge's organ in Christ Church, Spitalfields. On through the 19th century, the rise of 'Father' Willis is charted through numerous examples of his work, and in his segment with Bruce Buchanan, David Wyld illustrates how pipe scale boards dating from the firm's earliest days enabled the firm to embrace mass-production techniques which ensured consistency of quality, and which remain in use today. Great firms such as Hill, T.C. Lewis and Harrison & Harrison come into focus, as well as builders formed by strategic and economic amalgamations; post-war developments, including the ▷

▼ Renatus Harris's organ for St Botolph's, Aldgate (1704), signposted the renaissance of the English organ





◀ The 'Father' Willis organ at Truro Cathedral (1887) survives tonally intact

THE ENGLISH ORGAN – Featured organs

Part 1 – 'The Long Beginning'

Wetheringsett Organ

Adlington Hall (c.1680, unknown)

St Botolph's, Aldgate (1704, Renatus Harris)

Christ Church, Spitalfields (1735, Richard Bridge)

Clare College, Cambridge (1755, John Snetzler)

Ponsonby Baptist Church, Auckland, NZ (1779, John Avery)

Ashridge House (1818, Thomas Elliott)

St James's, Bermondsey (1829, James Bishop)

St Anne's, Limehouse (1851, Gray & Davison)

Kidderminster Town Hall (1855, William Hill)

St George's Hall, Liverpool (1855, 'Father' Willis)

Part 2 – 'The Victorian Boom'

Scudamore Organ (1855, 'Father' Willis)

Holy Trinity, Walton Breck (1863, 'Father' Willis)

St Bartholomew's, Armley (1869, Edmund Schulze)

City Baptist Church, Launceston, Tasmania, AU (1874 Bevington)

St George's, Cullercoats (1885, T.C. Lewis)

The Grove Organ, Tewkesbury Abbey (1885, Michell & Thynne)

Truro Cathedral (1887, 'Father' Willis)

St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, AU (1890, T.C. Lewis)

Sydney Town Hall, AU (1890, William Hill & Son)

Christ Church, Port Sunlight (1904, Henry Willis II)

Part 3 – 'Modernity and Nostalgia'

First Universalist Church, Rochester, New York, US (1908, Robert Hope-Jones)

Dunedin Town Hall, NZ (1919, Hill, Norman & Beard)

Caird Hall, Dundee (1923, Harrison & Harrison)

King's College, Cambridge (1934, Harrison & Harrison)

Lady Susi Jeans House Organ, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (1936, Eule/Hill, Norman & Beard)

The London Oratory, Brompton (1954, J.W. Walker & Sons)

Coventry Cathedral (1962, Harrison & Harrison)

Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, University of York (1969, Grant, Degens & Bradbeer)

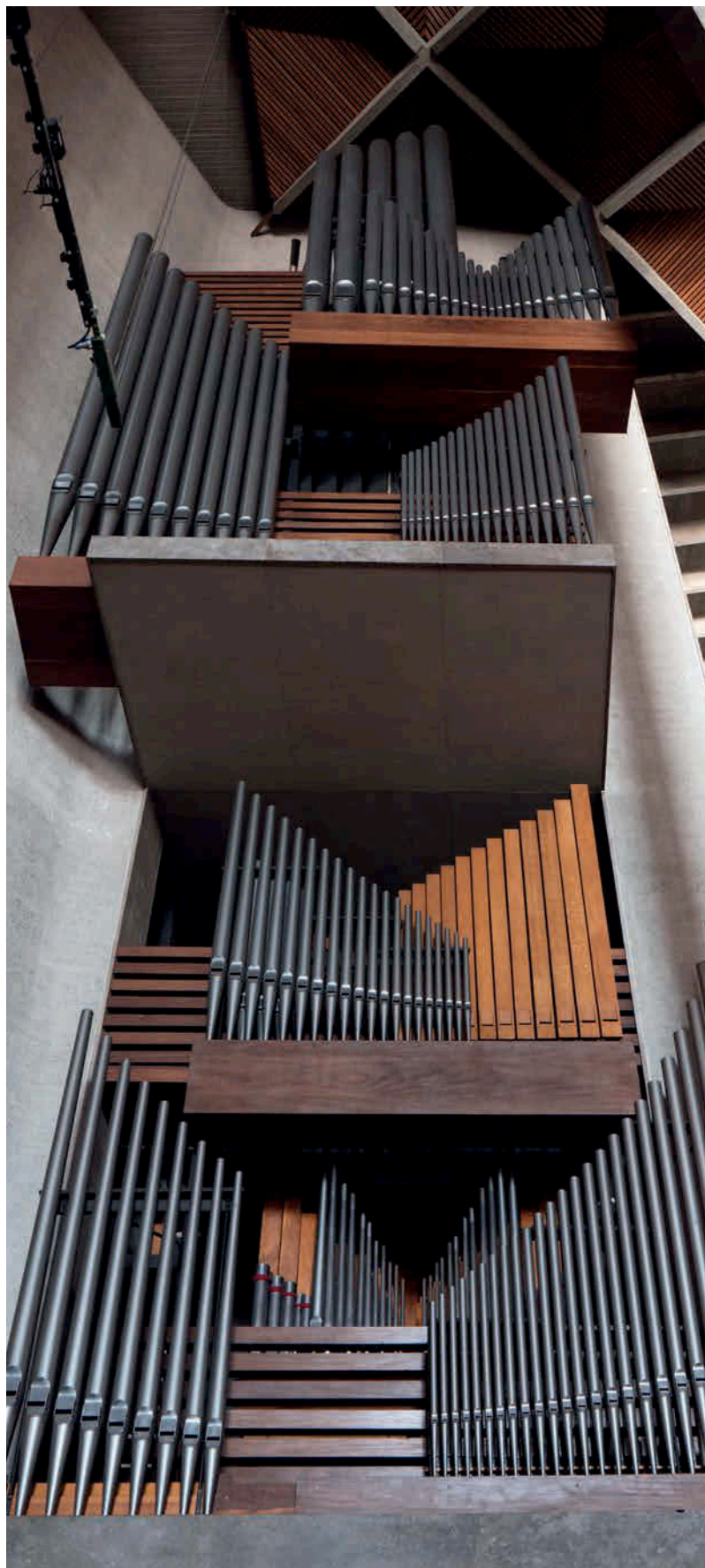
St Ignatius Loyola, New York City, US (1993, Mander Organs)

The Chapel of St Mary Undercroft, Palace of Westminster (1999, William Drake)

Edington Priory (2014, Harrison & Harrison)

Auckland Cathedral, NZ (2017, Nicholson & Co.)





◀ The Harrison & Harrison organ for the new Coventry Cathedral (1962) took its cue from the modern design of architect Basil Spence

◀ influence of the neo-classical movement, are included to bring the continuum up to the present day.

Pledged to follow the English organ in its best manifestations, the production team headed to Australia and New Zealand, where Auckland Cathedral's 2017 Nicholson offers a fine example of the continuing English export trend, and frequent *C&O* contributor John Maidment is on hand as an eloquent witness on behalf of organs incoming from the Old Country. Moulton clammers through the chambers of the Hill organ in Sydney Town Hall to inspect the 64ft Contra-Trombone, an exercise not unrelated to tree-hugging. And in the US, Moulton presents the case for the Rudolph Wurlitzer-rebuilt 1908 Robert Hope-Jones organ of First Universalist Church, Rochester, NY – this, along with the Mander organ at St Ignatius Loyola in New York, was an important port of call, because this early Hope-Jones was largely untouched tonally, if not in optimum condition: 'It demonstrates,' says Moulton, 'that Hope-Jones wasn't – as his detractors say – someone inventing things which didn't work in their garden shed, but who had real purchase and was taken seriously.'

Moulton is a perceptive guide through the shifting fashions in English organ design. He charts the development in usage brought about by the rise of the choir in the 19th century and the need to provide rich accompaniments for it – the film starts with Moulton accompanying the choir of Truro Cathedral ('Father' Willis, 1887) in Stanford's *A major Magnificat*; and the developing view of the organ in society today, in both its ecclesiastical and secular contexts, is canvassed.

'But above all, this is a musical story, filled with dozens of pieces of music that are, or have been, incredibly significant, popular and loved,' Fraser concludes. In the package's 3-CD set, producer and player meticulously match organs, their eras, and repertoire – Byrd at Wetheringsett; Stanley at Spitalfields; Wesley at Ashridge House; W.T. Best at St George's Hall, Liverpool, where the virtuoso reigned supreme; Brahms on the Schulze at Armley; Hollins on the organ he designed (Caird Hall, Dundee); Howells at King's College, Cambridge; Brian Brockless at Coventry Cathedral; and Ronald Corp at Auckland Cathedral.

Will Fraser's long-term aim is to develop the idea of a visual encyclopedia of the organ. The English Organ will surely form a lodestone in that ambition. ■

The English Organ is available from fuguestatefilms.co.uk

Graeme Kay is a former editor of Classical Music, Opera Now and BBC Music magazines. He is a digital platforms producer for BBC Radio 3 and 4.



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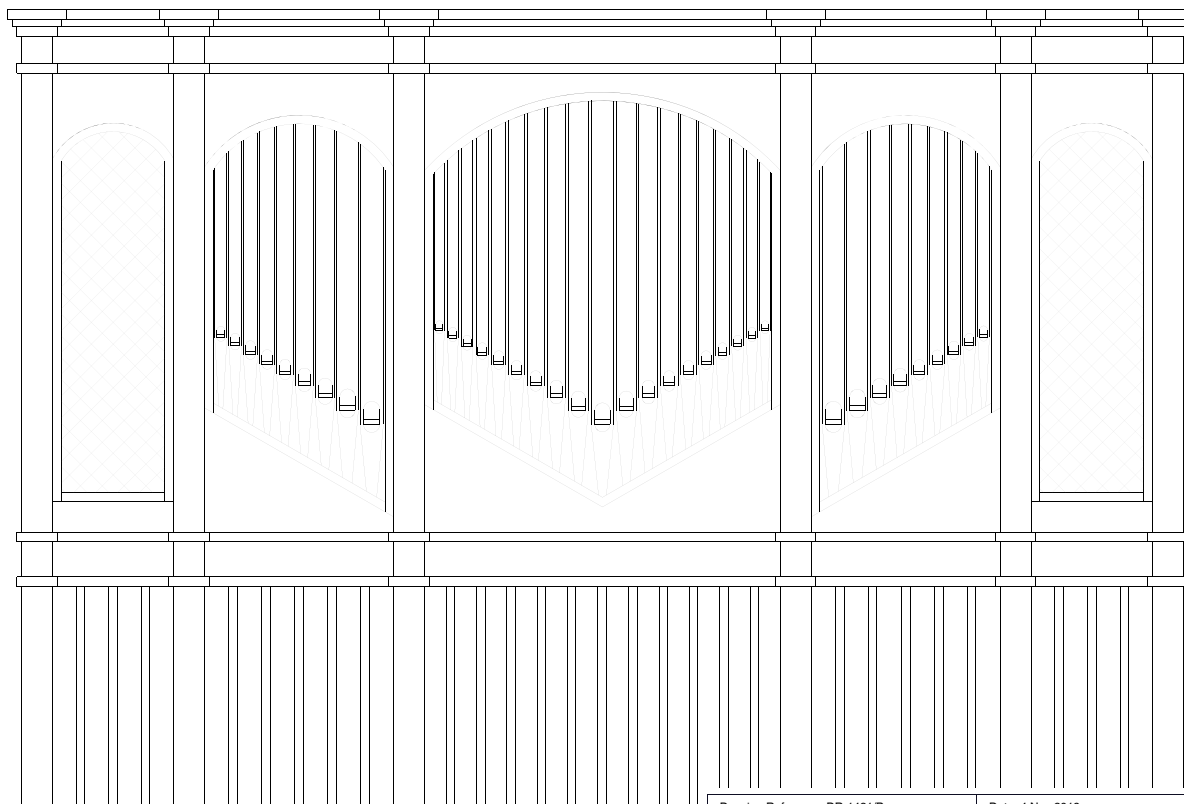
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From strength to strength

Having progressed from being a PhD student to a composer-in-residence with the BBC, Dobrinka Tabakova has had an eventful 14 years. **Harriet Clifford** catches up with her to discuss everything from the highs of her career so far, to the landscape of composition in the UK

As a teenager, being in a choir was probably one of the highlights of my social life,' Bulgarian-born composer Dobrinka Tabakova admits with a laugh. More seriously, she explains, 'I love writing for voices ... I always go back to that and think about how much I felt part of something, at an age where you can feel a little bit isolated.'

The composer has lived in London since 1991, and when asked how she found herself in this profession, she responds with surprise: 'I haven't thought about it being a profession. It's how I make a living but it's also kind of a hobby.' She has been composing through improvisation for as long as her hands have been big enough to stretch across the piano keys, but she takes the hard work put in over the years in her stride, saying, 'It just found me, I guess.'

Since the last time she was interviewed for *C&O* [September/October 2005], Tabakova's career has flourished, taking her from being a PhD student in composition at King's College London to chairing the BBC Young Musician jury and holding a long-term residency with the BBC Concert Orchestra.

Looking back over the last 14 years, she acknowledges that two of her proudest achievements have been the release of her Grammy-nominated debut album, *String Paths* [EMC New Series, 2013], as well as her most recent album, released on Regent

Records this September, *Kynance Cove; On the South Downs; Works for Choir* [REGCD 530], which earned a five-star review in *Choir & Organ* (see October issue). 'Releasing albums for a composer is important because other than live performances, the only time that people can hear your music is through recordings.' She explains that an album allows a composer to step back, gain perspective, and see a culmination of their work programmed under one theme or idea.

'Streaming opens up [music] to more people who otherwise may have felt that they didn't belong at that kind of concert'

As well as these successes, Tabakova is candid about the challenges of being a freelance composer. 'The fact that I'm still doing it is something that I'm proud of,' she says, explaining that she tries not to think about the 'strange responsibility' of being in charge of her career in such an all-consuming way. 'As anyone who does it will tell you, the exciting thing is that nothing is the same from day to day, but at the same time you have to be the person who sets the structure of your days or longer-term projects.'

Rather than having a day-to-day routine, though, she says, 'It's mostly month-to-month. It takes me a long time to really get into the compositional zone. But once I'm in it, it can be a few months of not really going out very much and just concentrating on

writing.' This then swings in the opposite direction once the music is written, with lots of rehearsals, talking to people and attending events. 'I think that's also one of the challenges, just learning about the gear shifts of a compositional life.'

From 2014 to 2016, this pendulum-like lifestyle saw Tabakova immersed in reading almost all of Shakespeare's plays as part of her residency with the Orchestra of the Swan, an ensemble based in the

playwright's birthplace of Stratford-upon-Avon whose aim is to champion new music. This project culminated in *Immortal Shakespeare*, a cantata for choir and orchestra commissioned to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. She describes this as 'a very significant project' of around 35 minutes in length, which involved shaping the text to go alongside the score. Taking Jaques's famous 'All the world's a stage' monologue in *As You Like It* as a starting point, she brought together a selection of texts from across Shakespeare's oeuvre, charting the seven ages of man, from infancy to old age. The final chorale took the words from Shakespeare's funerary monument at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, where the cantata was premiered in April 2016.

◀ 'The fact that I'm still doing it is something that I'm proud of': Dobrinka Tabakova on composition



▲ Truro Cathedral's director of music Christopher Gray, Dobrinka Tabakova and producer Gary Cole at the recording of the Truro Canticles



▲ The choral postlude of the cantata *Immortal Shakespeare*, set to the inscription above the playwright's grave

- ◀ Her 2016-18 residency in Truro made Tabakova the first female composer commissioned by the Cathedral, and resulted in the recording of her most recent album. This also coincided with the appointment of the first girl choristers at the Cathedral, which she explains made the project all the more significant: 'I feel really proud knowing

that the first girl choristers will in some way associate their experience with the pieces I've written for them during this time. That's why this album is quite important and dear to me.'

During her residency, Tabakova spent time listening to the choir rehearse for services, and walking around the cathedral to develop an understanding of the acoustics and timbre of the voices. 'Compared with one-off commissions, it's a more intense relationship and one where each piece written seems to lead to the next ... The culmination was the Truro Canticles, which are very special to me, as I cannot imagine writing this music for anyone else or for another space.'

Before the introduction of girls to cathedral choirs (in 1991, at Salisbury), she says, no one questioned the status quo, 'so it was a comfortable state.' 'It was really great that Christopher Gray [Truro's director of music] took a step back and saw the bigger picture – it's not just [about having] girl choristers, it's about involving *everyone* in the music that's made in cathedrals.' By ensuring that this project was not just a box-ticking exercise, 'he embraced the whole vision of how the future I think will look – however many different types of people there are, everyone can have a

chance of developing their skills.'

Tabakova feels hopeful about the future for female composers, acknowledging the ground laid by previous generations, including women she has studied with, such as Diana Burrell. 'There are great women composers who have been working consistently hard for decades, and what I hope my generation can do is to make it easier for following generations not even to question these kinds of opportunities.'

Despite the high profile of many of the musicians and singers she has worked with, Tabakova does not see composing for amateur groups as an inferior craft. 'You can write with so many extended techniques, and a professional choir can just do it like that, but if you still want to achieve that level of excitement with limited technical ability, I think that's actually more challenging to you as a composer.' She would advocate a flexible, all-rounded approach to composition and believes that 'the ability to write for a variety of instruments and sonic palettes is also translated in the variety of difficulty levels that you are able to write for.'

In 2016, Tabakova demonstrated this approach in her role as the chair of the BBC

Young Musician jury. She speaks of the heavy weight of responsibility, 'because it's young musicians' careers and lives that you are helping to launch,' with three 'incredible' finalists and a lot of successful musicians coming before the final round. She was proud of the programme and explains that it was 'almost like another Master's degree,' learning how it worked backstage and being involved in the production as a whole.

Tabakova is currently in her third major residency – her second was with the Leipzig MDR Orchestra for the 2017/18 season – this time with the BBC Concert Orchestra, a partnership that also began in 2017. She takes stock of the value of residencies, appreciating the 'luxury' of spending a concentrated amount of time with one group of people: 'I think they've confirmed my personal aim, which is to work with individual musicians – it's something that's run through the whole of my compositional life.' In approaching a composition, Tabakova says her work is shaped by emotion, innovation and storytelling, as well as historical composers such as Schubert with his strong melodic lines, but then adds, 'Mostly, I think about the musicians.'

Her residency with the BBC Concert Orchestra involved Tabakova in composing a piece for the 2019 Proms to mark the 150th anniversary of Henry Wood, the event's founding conductor: 'What a way to have a

first Proms commission!' she reflects, with a combination of amusement and disbelief. The piece she had envisaged writing if she were ever asked to compose for the Proms space was 'something really quiet, transparent and still', but she felt that this wouldn't reflect Wood's character, deciding instead to write something more 'energetic,' 'fun' and 'bold'. *Timber & Steel* was born, a piece written not only to celebrate Wood, but also to reflect the rise of industrialisation during his lifetime, as well as growing technological advances since his death.

Tabakova was particularly excited about 'The Fruit of Silence', a programme with the City of London Sinfonia, which toured the UK in October, bringing an immersive musical experience to nine cathedrals across the country [see *Freestyle*, p.35]. Audience members were encouraged to sit on cushions around the cathedral, as well as walk through the building and admire the awe-inspiring architecture, creating their own musical journeys. Her *Organum Light* (for string quintet) and *Centuries of Meditations* (for choir, strings and harp, written for Three Choirs Festival in 2012) were performed alongside works by Arvo Pärt and Pēteris Vasks, among others, with the hope that these accessible performances would bring classical music to a wider demographic.

Thinking about the current demographic at concerts of her own music and of others,

Tabakova explains, 'Although it's a double-edged sword, the fact that there's so much streaming at the moment is opening up those kinds of sounds to more people who otherwise may have felt that they didn't belong at that kind of concert.' She hopes that the streaming will translate to walk-in attendance by younger audience members and those who may not usually find themselves exposed to classical music.

She believes that the breadth of styles in the UK makes it 'one of the healthiest musical landscapes anywhere,' reflecting the variety of musicians who want to see music that represents them. In conjunction with this, she hopes that innovative programming continues to be celebrated: 'I don't think you can just get away with a symphony, a five-minute new work and then a concerto – I think people will need to be a little more inventive.'

The last time *C&O* spoke to Tabakova, she expressed a desire to compose a rock concerto for viola. Did this project ever come to fruition? She responds with a laugh, neatly bringing the conversation to a cyclical conclusion: 'I did write a jazz suite, but the rock thing didn't really happen. I wonder why?' *dobrinka.com* ■

Information about purchasing scores of Dobrinka Tabakova's music can be obtained from info@valonius.co.uk.

▼ The composer at a rehearsal of *Timber & Steel* with the BBC Concert Orchestra, conducted by Bramwell Tovey



RUTH POTTER BBC CONCERT ORCHESTRA



Lost and found

Chris Bragg investigates a new reconstruction by Bernhardt Edskes of a Schnitger organ lost in 1896. PHOTOS COURTESY CHRIS BRAGG

Groningen is a name to conjure with if you are disposed to an interest in organs. And one name particularly associated with that elegant city in the northern Netherlands is that of Arp Schnitger, surely the most famous and admired organ builder of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. While Schnitger's unique business model allowed him to send organs all over Europe, working in the Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden, and the north in particular, would have been an especially attractive proposition; the provinces were prosperous and politically stable. Now, in the 21st century, the Schnitger landscape of the city of Groningen has recently been enriched with a new instrument in the Lutheran Church.

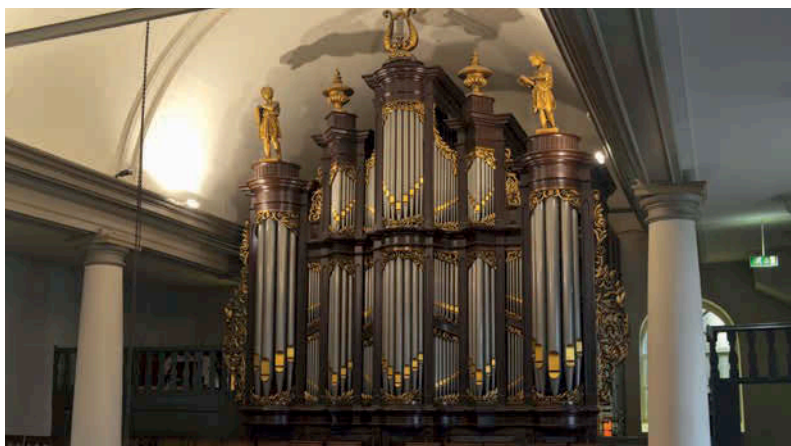
Opened in 1696, the church is a modestly sized 'schuilkerk' (clandestine church; the Lutherans were tolerated by the city council but forbidden, for example, to have either a bell or a tower). Indeed, the passer-by in the Haddingestraat might easily mistake the enlarged 19th-century façade for that of a municipal building or school. The significance of this Lutheran Church to Schnitger himself, however, is noteworthy. Following the success of his work on the famous organ in the Martinikerk in 1691-92, Schnitger maintained a presence in the city and was a member of the congregation. During this time, he completed numerous instruments in both 'Stad' and 'Ommeland', turning the city into one of the foremost organ centres in the country. Of the city organs, three survive: in addition to that at the Martinikerk, the organ of the Academiekerk (1702), housed since 1815 in the Der Aa-Kerk, where Schnitger's largest organ in the Netherlands had been destroyed in 1710 when the church tower collapsed; and the small organ of the Pelstergasthuiskerk (1693). Another casualty of Groningen's Schnitger heritage was the organ he gifted to his own congregation in 1699. This had two manuals (Manuaal and Borstwerk) and pedal pull-downs and, like most small Schnitger organs, likely had short octaves in the bass. The large congregations with their lusty singing demanded the addition of an independent pedal, and this was eventually completed in new side towers by Schnitger's excellent Groningen journeymen Rudolf Garrels and Johannes Radeker (father of the first organist of the Haarlem Müller organ) in 1718. Schnitger himself had written the first proposal

for this addition as early as 1711. The organ was further expanded through the addition of a Rugwerk in 1852 by Herman Eberhard and Willem Frederik Freytag, and survived in this evolved state until 1896 when it was unceremoniously replaced with a new organ by Cornelis and Antonius van Oeckelen, sons of Petrus van Oeckelen, the prolific organ builder who had come to Groningen from Breda in the south. Van Oeckelen senior showed less sympathy for the Schnitger tradition than had the more conservative local builders, whose roots could be traced back to the Schnitger school (Freytag, Timpe, Van Dam), and in disposing of the Schnitger organ, his sons displayed something of the same indifference. Nevertheless, their organ is a solidly traditional instrument, with a grand, highly decorated case, mechanical action, no enclosed division and a high bench and straight, flat pedalboard. Especially charming are the free reed Klarinet and the variety of 8ft flues which delight with their 'Mendelssohnian' sweetness. In removing the old organ, the brothers took with them Freytag's Rugwerk, which they rebuilt and rehoused in the village church of Gasselternijveen.

The impetus to regain the lost Schnitger organ in the 21st century came from the church's gifted organist, Tymen Jan Bronda. Bronda is nothing if not ambitious, founding in 2006 the Luther Bach Ensemble, a professional orchestra and semi-professional choir based in the church and performing regularly in cantata services and concerts. The reputation of the group has grown such that commercial recordings and

► Recreating Schnitger: the new organ by Bernhardt Edskes for the Lutheran Church, Groningen

▼ The 1896 Van Oeckelen organ which displaced Arp Schnitger's organ of 1699



► (top) The manual keyboards protrude significantly further from the case than in surviving Schnitger organs; (bottom) the continuo keyboard, at the front of the gallery makes six stops of the organ available to the director of the musicians

◄ performances much further afield, and with artists of the calibre of Ton Koopman and Rachel Podger, are regular occurrences. Understandably dissatisfied with the use of a standard continuo organ, and with an eye on the Luther year of 2017, Bronda set the project in motion. The new organ would be based on the original Schnitger concept following the addition of the Garrels/Radeker pedal and installed directly opposite the location of its illustrious predecessor, that place now inhabited by the Van Oeckelen organ which, in the meantime, had gained the status of a protected monument. The builder would be Bernhard Edskes, a name legendary in European organ building of the last 50 years and considered by many to possess an unsurpassed knowledge of the organs and working methods of Schnitger.

Edskes is a Groningen native, growing up with the (unrestored) sound of Schnitger's organs in his ears. As a young man he was closely involved in the 'game-changing' Schnitger anniversary events in Groningen in 1969 initiated by the young Harald Vogel and others. Brother of the late Cor Edskes, whose vast research made him one of the world's most influential figures in the renewed understanding of historic organs (and Schnitger in particular), the younger Edskes has spent much of his life in Switzerland. Here he worked for many years for Metzler as one of the first builders to seriously emulate historic models, designing, among others, the organ at Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1975 he founded his own workshop. His widely admired triumphs include the reconstructions of the Faber organ at Zeerijp (1979; the first organ in the Netherlands in modern times to be tuned in meantone), and of the Vater organ at Melle (2000) and the restoration of the Schnitger organ at Mariana (Brazil). If the high-profile restoration of the Schnitger organ at Uithuizen has sharply divided the crowd, a recent organ in Dübendorf, divided either side of a stained-glass window with a detached console and entirely mechanical action, has wowed visitors.

In Groningen, no physical trace of the original organ, nor any image depicting it, had survived. Nonetheless, the philosophy behind the new organ's concept was uncompromising: to construct an instrument as closely as possible to that original, and in every detail of execution according to Schnitger's practices, as evidenced elsewhere. Some deliberate diversions were made from the surviving sources regarding the specification of the lost instrument nonetheless: an 8ft Praestant (from F) and, instead of an 8ft Vox Humana, a 16ft Fagot (for continuo use and to lend 'graviteit' as per Bach's proposal for Mühlhausen in 1708) on the Hoofdwerk; a 4ft Praestant; and, instead of a Kromhoorn, a Dulciaan 8ft on the Borstwerk. Schnitger's own 1711 proposal for the independent pedal describes the width of the organ, both existing and proposed. By applying his strict geometric formulae and the Hoofdwerk/Borstwerk concept, a single model presented itself on which the case could be based. This was the instrument at Pellworm, built in 1711. The case with its rich carvings (including 4ft reductions of the eagles on the former Borstwerk doors in the Der Aa-Kerk) are virtuosic recreations of the art of, respectively, Allert Meijer and Jan de Rijk, whose glorious woodwork and carvings adorn Schnitger's organs in the Groningen area, imbuing them, as Cor Edskes has noted, with an aristocratic visual character, through the application of strictly classical detailing.¹ Two of the three putti which sit atop the organ are thought to be by De Rijk himself, carved for the original instrument. A particularly clever addition to the organ is the second, continuo console, located at the front of the gallery and allowing the

Lutherse Kerk, Groningen

BERNHARDT EDSKES (2017)

MANUAAL

Praestant*	8	Bourdon	16
Holpyp*	8	Praestant	8
Octaav*	4	Octaav	4
Spitsfloyt	4	Mixtuer	V
Nasat	3	Basuyn	16
Octaav*	2	Trompet	8
Sexquialter	II	Cornet	2
Mixtuer	V-VI		
Fagot	16	<i>Stops marked * are also available on the continuo console</i>	
Trompet	8		

BORSTWERK

Gedekt*	8	<i>Three cut-out valves ('afsluiters')</i>	
Praestant	4	<i>Shove Coupler</i>	
Blockfloyt*	4	<i>Tremulant</i>	
Octaav	2	<i>Cymbelsterren</i>	
Waldfloyt	2	<i>Pitch: a= 415Hz</i>	
Quint	1½	<i>Tuning: drawn from Arnolt Schlick</i>	
Scharp	IV	<i>Wind pressure: 78.9mm</i>	
Dulciaan	8	Compasses	
		<i>Manuals: C, D-d3</i>	
		<i>Pedal: C,D-d1</i>	



player, via what in Britain would have been called a 'long movement', to play six stops of the organ (including the 8ft and 4ft principals of the Manuaal) from a distance, while directing the musicians. Had money allowed, it is tempting to wonder whether this concept might have been extended to facilitate 16ft pedal accompaniment, as described by writers such as J.F. Walther, Niedt and even Freiberg Dom organist Elias Lindner, who requested that Gottfried Silbermann rework the Pedal 16ft Posaune to make it more suitable for concerted music.ⁱⁱ A second player can play organ obbligato parts from the main console if required.

I visited the Lutheran Church for the first time while the organ was being installed. In order to emulate Schnitger's working methods, all voicing was done in the room itself, the wind pressure and cut-ups determined as well as the toe openings, the width of the reed

No physical trace of the original organ, nor any image depicting it, had survived

tongues, the length of the resonators and the soldering of the caps on the stopped metal pipes. Even before any pipes had been placed in the organ, a positively monastic working atmosphere was discernible and the implied attention to detail is evident in every aspect of the organ's execution. The case with its fabulously carved decoration, all in quarter-sawn oak (coloured with a boiled mixture of oak shavings and ammonia), is of the very first rate. This is a splendidly assured instrument and a tangible tribute to the vibrant musical culture Tymen Jan Bronda has created.

But that isn't to say that the instrument doesn't raise some questions too. Why, for example, if Schnitger's examples are paramount in every aspect of its guiding principles, do the manuals protrude so far from the case? In Pellworm, as one would expect, the front edge of the upper manual is located very slightly behind the front of the organ case. In Groningen the *back* edge of the Borstwerk keyboard is in almost exactly the same position. Second, does a key action which, while pleasant to play, barely engages either arm or leg weight, nor encourages significant differentiation between a 'good' and a 'bad' sound (despite Edskes's assertion that this was executed 'exactly according to Schnitger's construction methods') really emulate the experience of playing the 'real thing'? Another question concerns the historic case measurements, which were not adjusted in line with the pitch. It is known for certain that the organ as it stood originally was tuned in 'koortoon' (i.e. $a = c.465$), as is the organ at Pellworm to this day. Radeker and Garrels's contract, on adding their independent pedal





▲ The new Edskes organ's case is based on Schnitger's 1711 organ at Pellworm

◁ in 1718, stipulated that the pitch would be lowered by a tone. That this came to pass is contradicted by a source from immediately prior to the organ's removal by Van Oeckelen, which complains that the pitch was 'twee halve toonen te hoog' (two semitones too high), and also by the re-used Freytag stops in Gasselternijveen to which Van Oeckelen added new pipes for low C and C sharp. The new organ is at a= 415, understandable when its extensive role as a continuo instrument is considered.

What then of the sound? The voicing bears witness to extensive, on-site tonal finishing by a master ear. But does it really evoke the best-preserved organs of the Schnitger school? Above all, the speech is quick, initial consonant is minimal (and regular) and the fundamental sound is noticeably less overtone-rich than the organs by Schnitger's 'meesterknechten' Hinsz and Vater described in the October 2019 issue of *C&O*. Indeed, it's hard to play this organ and not to be reminded again of Andreas Werckmeister's wisdom: 'Of course they can be voiced to speak more quickly, but [then] they also sound dull and unfriendly. It is better for a pipe to speak a little more slowly in return for retaining its brightness...' Edskes's pipework is copied from the countless Schnitger(-school) organs restored and studied by him, drawing too on the incomparable archive of data collected by his brother, using metal of precisely the alloy employed by Schnitger and scraped by hand. There is no lack of research or understanding here whatsoever. But my instincts at least prompt me to ask a final, near-sacrilegious question: could it be, perhaps, that Bernhardt Edskes's own profound artistry has come between us as players/listeners and the material he has so diligently emulated? Imperfection was surely

never the goal of great art, but might linear perfection not, on occasion, be said to stifle expression? The three articles in this series perhaps highlight a deeper rift between those associated with the Göteborg project (of which Edskes is highly critical) and others whose interpretations of surviving historic material differ. From a personal perspective it's hard to pinpoint what I miss in Groningen, but I think a clue can be heard in the organ by Van Oeckelen which displaced its predecessor. In that instrument there is a hint of a tradition almost past; that 'Mendelssohnian' sweetness bears an expression which engages the ear in a way the new organ, for all its obvious quality, never quite manages. ■

Thanks to Tymen Jan Bronda for his kind hospitality and allowing access to both instruments at the Lutherse Kerk. Technical information in this article is largely drawn from De Renaissance van een Barokinstrument by Victor Timmer, published by the Stichting Reconstructie Schnitger-orgel Lutherse Kerk Groningen, 2017.

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Chris Bragg studied organ at the former RSAMD, and the Conservatories of Amsterdam and Utrecht. He is head of programming at the University of St Andrews Music Centre and artistic director of St Andrews Organ Week as well as a freelance organist, teacher, writer and translator.

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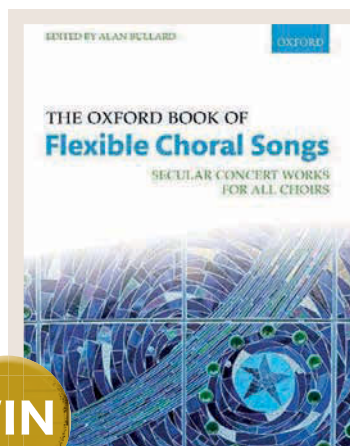
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A musical journey

In a two-part series, **Malcolm Bruno** surveys the shape-shifting orchestrations of Handel's *Messiah* from the work's completion in 1741 to the present day

Handel's *Messiah* is like no other work in the western musical canon. In its extraordinary history it has been performed continuously to ever-growing audiences since its 1742 debut. Composed in London during late summer 1741 and first performed in Dublin the following spring – with a dozen singers and a small instrumental ensemble in a modest concert room – it grew quickly in size and magnificence. For 17 years – from

its first performance in 1742 to the last under the composer's direction in 1759 – its popularity soared not only with Londoners of distinction, but in the provinces, including Dublin. Performed in Handel's final years in London's Foundling Hospital chapel (accommodating an audience of some 1,200), annual charity performances of *Messiah* became the city's greatest musical festivity. By 1784, to mark the centenary of Handel's birth, a week of celebrations – whose concerts

engaged the unprecedented choral and orchestral forces of some 513 performers – were held at Westminster Abbey.

A decade earlier *Messiah*'s fame had reached Handel's native homeland, with the first German performance in Hamburg in 1772. Five years later Mozart first heard *Messiah* in a shortened version by Johann Adam Hiller, third cantor after Bach in Leipzig's Thomaskirche. Finally, in 1789, just two years before his death, Baron van

▼ The final bars of the 'Hallelujah' chorus from Handel's *Messiah*, from the composer's autograph score



WIKIPEDIA SCAN FROM THE STORY OF HANDEL'S MESSIAH BY WATKINS SHAW, PUBLISHED BY NOVELLO & CO. LTD, LONDON 1963



HÄNDEL HOUSE



HÄNDEL HOUSE MUSEUM, LONDON

▲ The Chandos Portrait of Georg Friedrich Händel (artist unknown), c.1720, in the Fitzwilliam Museum; Thomas Hudson's Portrait of Charles Jennens, c.1745, in the Handel House Museum, London

Swieten, the court librarian in Vienna and a great Handelian enthusiast, gave Mozart the task of creating a new orchestration of Handel's baroque original, to include a full complement of the latest Viennese winds. It was this Mozartean *Messiah* published in 1803 – ideally suited for what would become the modern orchestra – that transported the work into the symphonic era. It remained the benchmark for a *Messiah* until midway through the 20th century, when it was overtaken by the rise of the contemporary baroque orchestra.

With a growing interest in music before the symphonic era over the past 50 years, performances with smaller ensembles and baroque instruments have returned, first in collegiate chapels and then on the concert stage – in Britain and then beyond. Today, though it remains a popular work for large amateur choral societies, *Messiah* flourishes increasingly with highly skilled vocal ensembles accompanied by baroque or scaled-down modern orchestral forces.

A work of genius

Messiah wins our enthusiasm not only by virtue of Handel's music, but by the libretto of Charles Jennens. A man of wealth and

erudition, Jennens's passion for the stage was matched by a library of hundreds of volumes of music and literature and one of the finest art collections of his time. Though *Messiah* was not the first libretto he had prepared for Handel, he saw its uniqueness. As he wrote in a letter to his friend Edward Holdsworth on its completion: 'I hope to persuade Handel to set another Scripture

priest of the Church's greatest sacrament, nor a rabbi, the earthly Jesus of Nazareth. His was rather the Hebrew Messiah, the anointed one of God, recast in a secular, Promethean form: a suffering saviour derived from Old Testament prophecy, but one who redeems all humankind finally in the majestic vision depicted at the close of Scripture in the Book of Revelation.

Jennens's Messiah was the anointed one of God, recast in a secular, Promethean form

Collection I have made for him, & perform it for his own Benefit in Passion Week. I hope he will lay out his whole Genius & Skill upon it, that the Composition may excell all his former Compositions, as the Subject excells every other subject. The Subject is Messiah.'

Jennens's *Messiah*, however, features 'neither empty womb nor empty tomb'. The Christmas story is distilled to a cameo appearance of the shepherds, with Easter expressed in words borrowed from the Book of Job (in an entirely unrelated sense to their original context): 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'. Jennens's hero was neither the high

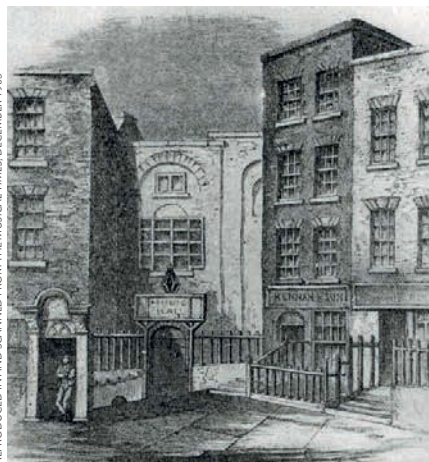
As the Jennens scholar Ruth Smith explains, 'the evangelically minded Jennens had the genius to see that the people most alienated from Christianity were the least likely to be reached by sermons, but could be reached by the emotional power of Handel's music. In the week before Easter such people would be more likely to attend a theatre than a church ... And besides reaffirming the faith of the faithful, *Messiah* was a summons to those who knew that they should believe, but were in danger of forgetting. Enlightenment rationalism questioned whether the Newtonian ruler of the cosmos could be interested in the fate

►

MESSIAH: 1

◁ of every human being. *Messiah* responded affirmatively with a reminder of personal judgement, redemption and eternal life.' It is certainly these universal qualities that have – without apparent limit – imbued *Messiah* with its exceptional longevity. *Messiah* flourishes today not only in Europe and America, and the English-speaking world at large, but as far as east China where a burgeoning market for choral music embraces the work anew.

▼ The New Music Hall in Fishamble Street, Dublin, where *Messiah* was premiered on 13 April 1742



REPRODUCED IN AND SCANNED FROM THE MUSICAL TIMES, DECEMBER 1903

A first *Messiah*

Like the Bible, *Messiah* defies singular definition, though unlike the Bible, its principal sources – the composer's autograph and conducting score – survive intact, the former housed behind thick glass and dimmed light in the British Library. From the start they became not a final, authoritative statement, but a well-spring – a blueprint from which Handel's lifetime *Messiah* journey in all its versatility would be initiated. The 'standard' *Messiah* familiar to many of us by contrast reflects only a tradition at the end of Handel's life, largely (if inadvertently) transmitted through Swieten/Mozart into the Victorian era.

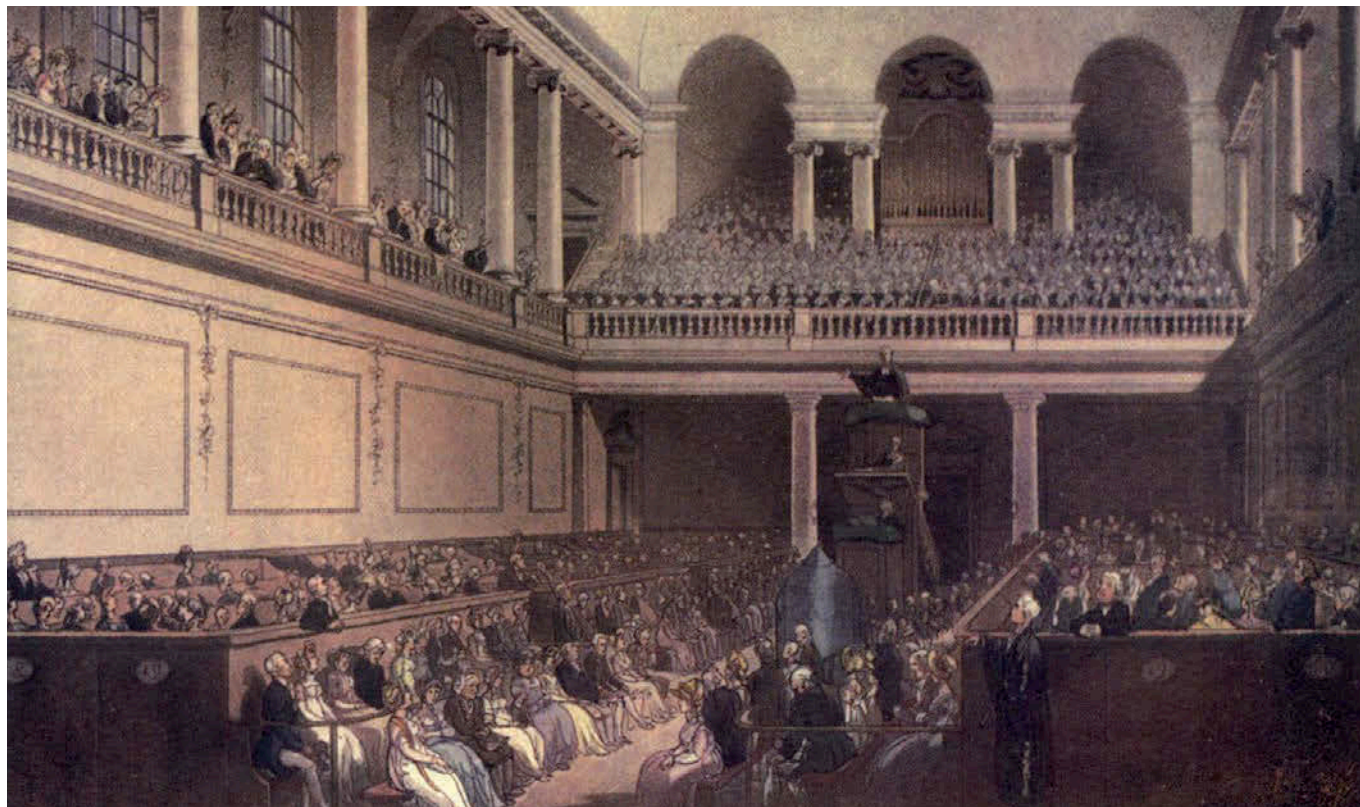
A recent surge of interest in rediscovering the unique earlier *Messiah* performances has focused on the composer's first 1742 revisions for the Dublin premiere – though these upon further reflection appear more a result of Handel's confrontation with provincial talent than his desire to recast the work more generally. Performances on his return to London in the 1740s and early 1750s support this view, with further revision centred on three notable arias for the 22-year old Italian castrato Gaetano Guadagni, of which 'But

who may abide' is the most sensational. During the 1750s a number of literal transpositions by Handel's amanuensis, John Christopher Smith, facilitated circumstances of individual performances and these include 'But who may abide' for soprano (up first to G and then to A minor).

Even more significant than such occasional inurement to vocal talent was the evolution of *Messiah* – even during Handel's lifetime – from an unstaged Lenten operatic work to a choral oratorio, a process clearly manifest by the late 1750s Foundling Hospital performances. In the 19th century the growth of the *Messiah* audience from London's operatic elite to the wider amateur public re-established the work entirely as a main staple of the newly emerging choral societies in England, Germany and America. Their many performances in vast concert halls or cathedrals contrasted sharply with Handel's original *Messiah*, featuring full da capo arias – such as 'Rejoice greatly' – that assumed a small, fleet professional vocal consort for a London theatre seating a few hundred patrons.

Breitkopf's illustrious publishing history of *Messiah* follows this history, beginning with Hiller's first edition of Mozart's orchestration

▼ The chapel of London's Foundling Hospital hosted regular charity performances of *Messiah* from 1750



in 1803. An epoch-making work (imported to London before mid-century in a number of English editions and finally championed by Ebenezer Prout for Novello in 1902), it was overtaken by Breitkopf's second *Messiah* publication. Appearing the same year as Prout's, it completed the monumental Händel-Gesellschaft project, in which Friedrich Chrysander offered a 'Mozart-free' *Messiah* and included, at vast cost, a lithographic print of the autograph.

A century beyond, full identification of all the known 18th-century manuscript copies of *Messiah* – a process begun in the 1940s by Harold Watkins Shaw – has given us a clearer picture of the composer's own performance intentions, including such practical matters as ornamentation and instrumentation. A third Breitkopf edition thus gives the opportunity to place centre-stage Handel's initial conception of the work – of its arias and their sequencing – and to uncover clues of early performance practice from a source in Dublin's Marsh's Library, the 'John Mathews Messiah'. Standing out against its contemporaries, this source derives ultimately and uniquely from a set of parts dated as early as 1743. Assembled originally from such material then in the song room of Salisbury Cathedral, its copyist, lay clerk John Mathews, amended an assiduously dated 'score-in-progress' as his cathedral career progressed from Salisbury to Durham and then to St Patrick's, Dublin. Its provenance has been shown to stem from London – perhaps from the original parts-borrowed by James Harris Esq. from Handel's London scriptorium for first performances in Salisbury. ■

Messiah 1741 was published by Breitkopf & Härtel in 2018; see review, p.87.

Recently visiting scholar at Princeton, musicologist Malcolm Bruno is editor of a number of major choral publications for Breitkopf & Härtel and Bärenreiter Verlag. An independent producer for BBC and Public Radio International in the US, since 2004 he has been artistic director of Larvik Barokk in Norway, where he also chairs the board of the ensemble Barokksolistene.

► NEXT ISSUE

The enduring impact of Mozart's orchestration

ROB SHIRET



Freestyle BY GRAEME KAY

Promenading in Liverpool

A trip to Liverpool to research a feature on Henry Willis & Sons afforded the opportunity to revisit this most extraordinary of British cities, with its 2,500 listed buildings (more of them Georgian than even the city of Bath can boast) and its two cathedrals – one the largest Anglican church in the world (disputed by Saint John the Divine in New York) and the other, Roman Catholic, dedicated to Christ the King, and the world's only circular cathedral.

I had never before visited the spectacular Lutyens crypt, vestige of the plan abandoned, due to the ravages of the second world war, to build the world's largest Catholic cathedral to a frankly overwhelming and – to be honest – fabulously ugly and oppressive design, like a vast brick dreadnought, by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Larger in itself than some cathedrals, the crypt's enormous spaces provide a treasury, a concert room, a multi-purpose hall, and a chapel in which is secreted a mechanical-action II/14 Rushworth & Dreaper organ, transferred from the redundant Church of St Patrick, Widnes in 1999. It should not be missed on any visit to that other architectural marvel upstairs.

While the so-nicknamed 'Paddy's Wigwam' is striking in design – welcoming, contemplative, a masterclass in the management of colour and light, and clearly in robust good health following the later addition of its processional staircase and the remedial work done to address serious construction flaws – by contrast the roseate glow of the Anglican



▲ Meditative mood: 'The Fruit of Silence' in Liverpool Cathedral

Cathedral's red sandstone offers a gateway to the numinous in a completely different way. On entering the building, feeling as small as a flea in a bell jar, one is always immediately struck by the atmosphere of quiet, warmth and curious intimacy which its colossal, uncluttered internal spaces belie.

Just how intimate the Cathedral can feel was demonstrated by a performance of 'The Fruit of Silence', a touring concert by the City of London Sinfonia, which this year paired its players with the cathedral choirs of Worcester, Exeter, Bristol, Sheffield, Bradford, Truro, Llandaff and Lichfield in a technically challenging programme of moving and meditative music by James MacMillan, Purcell, Vasks, Tavener, Bruckner, Pärt, Lotti, Allegri, Paul Mealor and Dobrinka Tabakova. As the musicians move around the buildings, the audience moves too, standing, or sitting on seats and beanbags *au choix*. Fruit of Silence, yes, but the indelible impression here in Liverpool was more likely to be the processions of light as we tracked the choir, under the direction of Lee Ward, round the Cathedral's beautiful spaces, their music illuminated by twinkling LED lights for Allegri's *Miserere* performed in stereo, with half the choir placed under Tracey Emin's lovely pink neon artwork saying, in her handwriting, 'I felt you and I knew you loved me', and the rest of the singers high up on the internal Dulverton Bridge.

More people should have been there to share this undeniably transcendent experience; but then it was a shock to call a taxi and hear the dispatcher ask, 'Which cathedral?' Fair question. 'The Anglican.' 'OK ...' Pause. 'Where is it?' ■

Graeme Kay is a digital platforms producer for BBC Radio 3 and 4.

GRAEME KAY

Alison Willis

Studying for a PhD and mentoring young composers are just two of the motivating factors in the life of Alison Willis; she talks to **Shirley Ratcliffe**

COURTESY ALISON WILLIS



▲ Commentating on injustices: composer Alison Willis

I think I am lucky to make a living doing something I love,' says Ali Willis, although she finds that composing alone doesn't offer security. 'I also accompany, conduct and teach, but it's sometimes frustrating that I don't have as much time as I would like to compose; I could happily write all day every day!' She is a slightly lapsed organist and sings with the Luminosa Chamber Choir: 'I had been wanting to join a choir for some time but have found it difficult to juggle with my other musical commitments.' Since we last met in 2017, she has continued to play fiddle and accordion in 'rocking folk band' Mad Magdalen and is also working on a solo recording project called *Love and Loyaltie*.

Willis is now a trustee of the Martin Read Foundation supporting young composers. 'The Foundation is a charity set up in memory of Martin Read, an outstanding composer and educator who died suddenly in 2012. He was passionate about teaching

young people to love music, particularly composition. The charity now supports a number of young composers through its mentoring scheme, offering one-to-one tuition with top contemporary composers such as Errollyn Wallen, Simon Speare and Matthew Taylor, alongside workshops and performances with professional performers.

'I wanted to get involved because the support I'd received was so important. The chance to workshop your music with professional musicians is such an eye-opener. The first workshop I attended was through the then SPNM [Society for the Promotion of New Music] with the London Sinfonietta conducted by George Benjamin, with whom I later had tutorials. It was definitely a life-changing experience. I had the privilege of mentoring for the first time this year; the advice I pass on [to young composers] is, "Listen, listen, listen to your own work and, crucially, to everything else going on around you."

Willis continues to broaden her outlook as a composer and is currently in the fourth year of a five-year part-time PhD course at the University of Aberdeen with Paul Meador and Phillip Cooke. 'What I am enjoying most is having both of these

'The advice I pass on to young composers is, "Listen, listen, listen to your own work and, crucially, to everything else going on around you"'

excellent composers listening to my work and offering ways of further developing my own voice. Both Paul and Phil take the time to really listen, and then make one or two suggestions that will definitely make the piece stronger. It's very exciting to hear the music of other postgraduate students in workshops and concerts. We have been given the opportunity to work with some outstanding musicians, including Juice, the BBC Singers and Cappella Nova.

'I love working with Kerry Andrew and Juice vocal ensemble. They are so creative and diverse, you always hear something you didn't expect, and for a composer that always sparks new ideas. They made me think about not just using words in vocal performance, but also using speech, sounds, vocalisations and body percussion. And working with the BBC Singers is, of course, an absolute privilege.'

Willis is motivated by looking this troubled world and its history firmly in the eye, and not flinching from it. 'My piece *Non omnis moriar*, which translates as 'Not All of Me Will Die', is an extraordinarily moving poem by Zuzanna Ginczanka, executed as a Jew in 1945. I wrote it for SSAA as I felt it was important that it was told by female voices. It was performed by the BBC Singers as part of a concert about the refugee experience in 2018.'

Racism and injustice dominate her thinking, so I ask if she is delivering a political statement. She replies emphatically, 'No! I don't want to tell people *how* to think, I just think they ought to. I don't see myself as propagating political opinions, just commentating on the injustices created by politicians. I would like to think it is more of a human message. I have a very strong sense

of right and wrong, and I like things to be fair. People should have a voice, even if it wasn't heard at the time; and music – particularly vocal music – sometimes makes it possible to give people that voice.' Willis is following a long line of composers who, over the centuries, have tried to bring healing and solace in the aftermath of war, or, in today's world, to draw attention to the chaos that surrounds us.

This year Willis won The Gesualdo Six Composition Competition. 'I set the last

poem that Ivor Gurney wrote, *The Wind's Warning*. It is a bleak reflection on the passing of time and lost opportunities.' Putting into practice what she had learnt, she explains, 'The piece uses vocalisations to create the sound of the wind, against which are gently dissonant clusters. Vocalisations such as "ssss", "shhh", "ffff" and gentle slides between notes create a sense of cold and loss. The premiere at Cadogan Hall was exactly as I hoped it would sound when I wrote it. It was then sung live on BBC Radio 3 and has received several subsequent performances. The Gesualdo Six are a pleasure to write for and I very much hope I can do so again.'

Since Willis wrote her joyful Easter organ piece *Paschalia* for the March/April 2017 issue of *Choir & Organ*, her compositions have included *A Light Not Yet Ready to Go Out*, a piece she describes as very close to her heart: 'It was commissioned and inspired by Adrienne Morgan, an extraordinary woman who is a scientist and campaigner. She is suffering from incurable breast cancer and from the first

conversation she made it very clear that the piece was to be a celebration of the things that were important in life. Following the sold out premiere [on 20 March 2018] in London, I am delighted to see this piece start to make its way in the world, particularly as the profits from sales of scores go to Breast Cancer, now with thanks to the Composers Edition for its ongoing support. Composers Edition specialises in contemporary music, so it seemed like a good fit [for me]. They are always creative, flexible and supportive and I am delighted to be published by them.'

After Hilary Campbell had conducted two of Willis's earlier pieces, the composer was asked to suggest something for Campbell's Blossom Street Singers album *This Day*, showcasing pieces by female composers in celebration of the 100 years since women got the vote. '*Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep* is a setting of Mary Elizabeth Frye's only accredited poem of the same name,' she explains. 'It was written in 1932 in response to the heartbreak experienced by Margaret Schwarzkopf, a German Jew staying with Mary in Baltimore, US. Though her mother

was ill, Margaret was unable to return to Germany to visit her due to the growing unrest at the time; and following her death, Margaret was devastated that she had never had the chance to "stand by my mother's grave and shed a tear". 'I set the poem using gentle cluster chords supporting elements of Jewish scales in the middle section as a homage to those forced from their homes, and all those separated from their loved ones throughout history.'

Willis's choral piece *My Boy Jack* has just been published by Oxford University Press as part of *Flexible Choral Songs* [see review, p.84], and *I Sing of a Maiden* in an *Anthology of Sacred Music by Women Composers*, published by Multitude of Voyces. She is currently working on *Salve Deus*, a piece for choir, organ and soprano solo that sets parts of a poem by Emilia Lanyer, the first woman to publish a volume of poems under her own name, including this particular female perspective on the Passion. 'And then,' Willis concludes, 'I should probably think about the final piece for my PhD...' ■ alisonwillis.com

▼ The BBC Singers: working with them was 'an absolute privilege'



SIM CAHNETT CLARKE

A musical force

Since its first edition in 2008, the Canadian International Organ Competition has become an established part of Montreal's cultural life, writes the **Editor**

There are many reasons to visit Montreal. Lovers of jazz are attracted to the city's annual International Jazz Festival; addicts of the thrills and spills of motor racing are drawn to the annual Canadian Grand Prix; those looking for a good laugh may attend Just for Laughs, the world's largest international comedy festival held every July; and those interested in architecture can trace the history of Canada's second city through its buildings.

For lovers of organ music, there is one additional, and strong, attraction: Montreal sports a fine collection of instruments by local builders Casavant, Létourneau and Juget-Sinclair, among others, as well as by non-Canadian builders – notably Rudolf von Beckerath, one of whose instruments stars alongside two others by Casavant in the Canadian International Organ Competition.

The competition (CIOC) was founded just over a decade ago by John Grew, organist of McGill University, who aimed to build on the city's long-standing tradition of organ concerts and excellent music schools. The first edition, held in 2008, attracted some 60 applications from 17 countries, from whom 16 were shortlisted. From the outset, the competition indicated a contemporary approach to presentation, eschewing the traditional anonymity of competitors in favour of a screen showing them performing live – the first international organ competition to do so. The CIOC returned to Montreal in 2011, and has been held triennially ever since.

2020 brings the fourth CIOC, and with a first prize of CA\$25,000 as well as numerous other prizes, the competition continues to attract organists from around

the globe up to the age of 35. The CIOC's commitment to supporting emerging young artists is also realised by the winner being offered artist management, worldwide concert engagements, and a professionally produced CD.

Since John Grew's retirement last year as artistic director emeritus, the CIOC has been under the artistic direction of Jean-Willy Kunz, organist in residence of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. He is joined on the 2020 jury by Martin Baker (UK), Bernard Foccroulle (BE), Michael Kapsner (DE), Rachel Laurin (CA), William Porter (US), Louis Robilliard (FR), Dong-Ill Shin (SK), and Patricia Wright (CA).

From its inception, the CIOC has sought innovative ways to increase public awareness of, and promote, the pipe organ as an instrument. Most recently, the CIOC actively participated in the production of a feature-length documentary, *Pipe Dreams*, by the Montreal-based film-maker Stacey Tenenbaum. The film follows five competitors on their journey toward the 2017 CIOC finals. The world premiere screening at the prestigious Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival in April 2019 was sold out, and it has been followed by a Canada-wide tour of screenings combined with concert performances by the film's stars.

The CIOC told *Choir & Organ*: 'The competition continues to grow with each instalment, not only in number of applicants but also in quality of playing. The overall level of virtuosity and artistry has reached an astounding degree and helps put to rest the myth that organ playing is a dying artform.'

Now a recognised force within the Montreal arts scene and the international community, the CIOC is a member of the World Federation of International Music Competitions. ■ cioc.org

▼ Alcee Chriss III performs to win the 2017 CIOC



JOHN ZIMMERMAN

COMPETITIONS 2020

Guide to Organ and Choral Competitions

Competitions are listed by date.

ORGAN

22nd International Organ Competition for the Wiesbaden Bach-Prize

Dates 9-11 January, 2020
Location Lutherkirche, Wiesbaden, Germany. Klais organ (1978); Walcker Organ (1911; restored by Klais 1987). In association with the 23rd Wiesbaden Bach Festival (Wiesbadener Bachwochen).

Eligibility Organists born after 1 January 1990. Organists who study with any of the jurors are excluded from the organ competition.

Prizes 1st prize (Bach-Prize) €5,000 plus a contract to play an organ concert in the 24th Wiesbaden Bach Festival 2021; 2nd prize €4,000; 3rd prize €2,500.

Jury Guy Bovet, Bine Katrine Bryndorf, Wolfgang Capek, Stefan Viegelaahn

Closing date 1 November 2019.
bach-wiesbaden.de/organ_competition.htm

Cambridge Academy of Organ Studies Competition for Student Organists

Dates 21 February 2020
Location Cambridge, Jesus College, UK. 2-manual and pedal organ by Kuhn (2007); 2-manual organ in historic English style designed by Sir John Sutton (1849) and restored by William Drake.

Prizes The winner will receive a prize of £500 and a lunchtime recital at St John's Smith Square.

Jury (chair) Paul Binski; Hans Davidsson, Martin Ennis.

Closing date Friday 24 January 2020.

Queries to Andrew Johnson, 01223 240026, andrew@cambridgeorganacademy.org
cambridgeorganacademy.org

Internationaler Bach Wettbewerb 2020

Dates 13-25 July 2020
Location Leipzig, Germany. Organs: Collon organ, University of Music and Theatre Leipzig; Silbermann organ, St Mary's Church, Rötha; 'Bach' organ, St Thomas's Church Leipzig.

Eligibility Organists who are at least 16 years old, born after 25 July 1987.

Prizes 1st prize €10,000; 2nd prize €7,500; 3rd prize €5,000.

Jury Bine Bryndorf, Arvid Gast (chair), Lorenzo Ghielmi, David Higgs, Rudolf Lutz, Daniel Roth, Martin Schmeding

Applications to wettbewerb@bach-leipzig.de

Closing date 25 February 2020 (date of postmark on the letter and date of e-mail).
bachwettbewerb-leipzig.de

International Organ Improvisation Competition, Haarlem

Dates 18 July – 1 August 2020
Location Haarlem, Netherlands. Organs by Christian Müller (1736, Grote of St-Bavokerk), Cavaillé-Coll (1871, Grote Zaal Philharmonie Haarlem), Adema (1907, Kathedrale Basiliek St-Bavo Haarlem)
organfestival.nl

IAO/RCO Organ Playing Competition 2020

Dates 25-26 July 2020
Location Edinburgh, St Cuthbert's Church: 4-manual organ (Hope-Jones, 1899 / Hill, Norman & Beard, 1928 / J.W. Walker, 1957/1998/2002).
Eligibility Open to organists aged from 18 to 26 years on 1 July 2020.
Jury Gerard Brooks, John Kitchen, Naji Hakim.

Prizes 1st prize £1,000; 2nd prize £500; 3rd £200; plus recital opportunities at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, the University of Edinburgh, St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, and at a future RCO event.

Closing date 1pm, Saturday 29 February 2020. **Details and application form** rco.org.uk/events/organ-competition-2020

Northern Ireland International Organ Competition 2020

Dates August 2020
Location Armagh, Northern Ireland. Organs by J.W. Walker & Sons (1840 onwards; latest 1954)/ Evans & Barr Ltd (1928)/Telford & Telford (1941)/Wells-Kennedy



▲ The 1736 Christian Müller organ takes centre-stage in the International Organ Improvisation Competition, Haarlem

Partnership Ltd (1996); and Wells-Kennedy (1986).

Eligibility Organists of any country aged 21 or under on the competition dates.

Categories Senior (post-grade 8),

Intermediate (grades 6-8), Junior (grades 4-5)

Pre-selection Senior category only, by recording (CD, mp3 or mobile recording).

Entry Send form and fee to

◀ Northern Ireland International Organ, Competition c/o Armagh Visitor Information Centre, 40 English Street, Armagh, Co. Armagh BT61 7BA, UK
Queries to info@niioc.com
niioc.com

Grand Prix de Chartres

Dates August – September 2020

Location Chartres Cathedral, France

Eligibility Organists born after 1 January 1988.

Pre-selection by recording

Terms & conditions see website orgue-chartres.org

8. Internationaler Franz-Schmidt-Organwettbewerb

Dates 11-19 September 2020

Location Vienna, Austria

Eligibility Organists of all nationalities born after 31 December 1984

Prizes 1st Prize €5,000; 2nd Prize €3,500; 3rd Prize €2,000.

Jury Helmut Binder, Bernhard Haas, Robert Kovács, Peter Planyavsky, Liubov Shishkhanova, (chair) Karl-Gerhard Straßl

Closing date 31 May 2020
orgelwettbewerb.at

Canadian International Organ Competition 2020

Dates 16-18 October 2020

Location Montreal, Canada
Organs by Beckerath (1961), Casavant (1915/1996), Casavant (1891/1924/1991).

Eligibility Organists born after 17 October 1985.

Prizes 1st Prize CA\$25,000 plus solo album recording and three-year career management and professional development by Karen McFarlane Artists and the CIOC; 2nd Prize CA\$15,000; 3rd Prize CA\$10,000. Additional Prizes: Gérard-Coulombe Bach Prize CA\$5,000, Louis-Vierne Prize CA\$5,000, Louis-Roubillard Prize CA\$5,000, RCOO Prize CA\$5,000, Charles-Tournemire Prize CA\$5,000, Richard Bradshaw Audience Prize CA\$5,000, Spinelli Prize CA\$5,000.

Jury Jean-Willy Kunz (president, CA), Martin Baker (UK), Bernard Focroulle (BE), Michael Kapsner (DE), Rachel Laurin (CA), William

Porter (US), Louis Robilliard (FR), Dong-Ill Shin (SK), Patricia Wright (CA)

Terms & conditions see website

Deadline Preliminary round applications and recordings must be submitted by 31 January 2020 (date of postmark).
ciocm.org

Concours André Marchal – 'L'Orgue des Jeunes'

Dates 19-21 October 2020

Location Paris, France

Terms & conditions TBC

Queries to Isabelle Sebah, secretary, Académie André Marchal, coordination.musique@laposte.net academieandremarchal.org

Petr Eben International Organ Competition

Dates October 2020

Location Opava, Czech Republic

Queries to Church Conservatoire of the Teutonic Order, Beethovenova 1, CZ-746 01 Opava, Czech Republic, +420 595 173 028, organ@konzervator.cz
konzervator.cz/organ

ORGAN – FUTURE COMPETITIONS

2021

12th Mikael Tariverdiev International Organ Competition

Dates April – September 2021

Location Lawrence (Kansas, USA), Hamburg (Germany), Moscow and Kaliningrad (Russia).

Entry By application form sent to The Organising Committee of the 11th M. Tariverdiev International Organ Competition, Usiyevicha Street 9/60, Moscow, 125319 Russia; or by e-mail to tariverdi@mail.ru; or via the website organcompetition.ru.

International Schnitger Organ Competition

Dates June 2021

Location Alkmaar, the Netherlands. Part of Orgelfestival Holland. Organs by Van Hagerbeer/Schnitger (1646/1725), Van Covelens (1511), Müller (Kapelkerk, 1762).

Prizes 1st prize €5,000 (Schnitger prize); 2nd prize €2,500 (Flentrop prize); 3rd prize €1,000 (Johan Knibbe prize); Izaak Kingma prize awarded by the audience

Eligibility Organists of any country born after 30 June 1985.
orgelfestivalholland.nl

St Albans International Organ Competitions 2021 (Interpretation and Improvisation)

Dates 5-17 July 2021

Location St Albans and London, UK. Part of St Albans International Organ Festival.

Organs by Harrison & Harrison (1962/2008-9), Peter Collins (1989), Mander (2006), Richard Bridge (1735, rest. 2014), Klais (1993).

Pre-selection By recording (see website for details).

Queries to Competitions Secretary, +44 7860 362173, competitions@organfestival.com
organfestival.com

XIVth International Gottfried Silbermann Competition Freiberg 2021

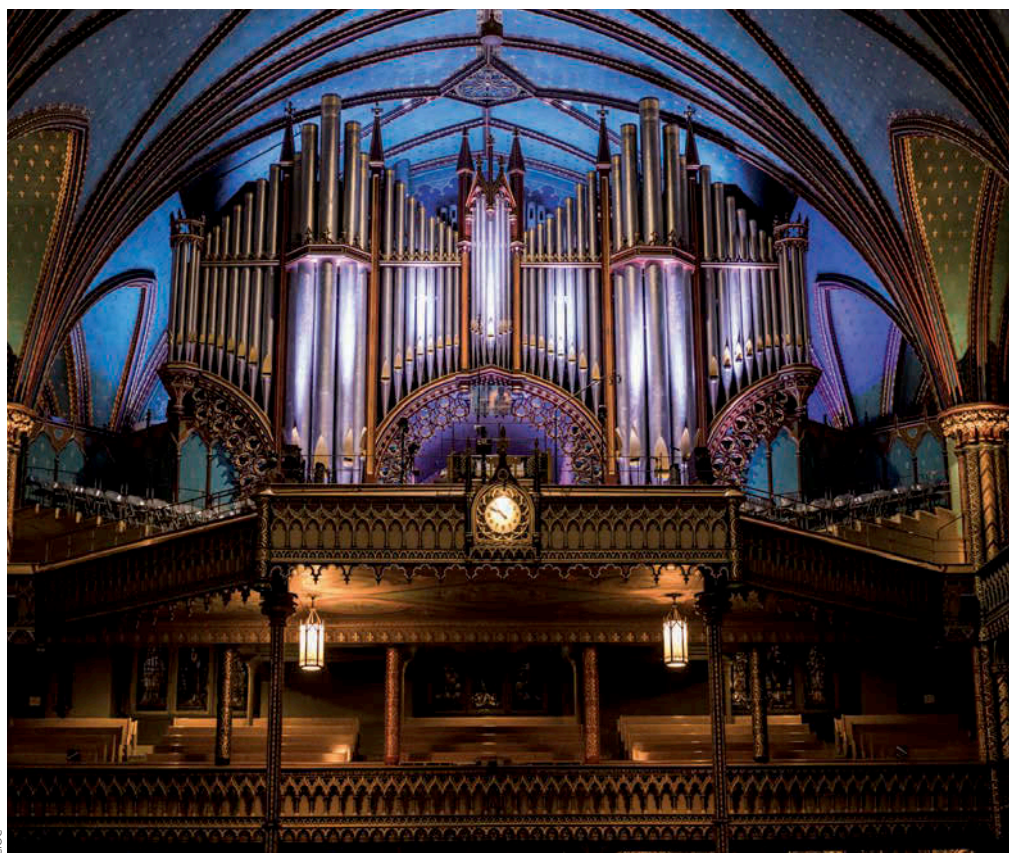
Dates September 2021

Location Freiberg, Germany. Organs by Silbermann (1718, Jakobikirche; 1714 and 1719, Freiberg Dom), Hildebrandt (1721, Langhennersdorf Church).

Prizes 1st prize € 7,000, 2nd prize €4,000, 3rd prize €3,000, plus concert engagements.

Eligibility Organists of any country born after 31 December 1989.

▼ The four-manual Casavant organ in Notre-Dame Basilica, Montreal, is one of the organs used in the Canadian International Organ Competition



CIOC

Pre-selection by unedited recordings of specified works (see website for details).
silbermann.org

5th International Buxtehude Organ Competition
Dates September 2021
Location Lübeck, Germany
Queries to Buxtehude-Organwettbewerb, Große Petersgrube 21, 23552 Lübeck, +49 451 1505 100 mh-luebeck.de

2022

International César Franck Competition

Dates May 2022
Location St Bavo, Haarlem, Netherlands.
Eligibility Organists of any nationality who have completed professional training and have recital capabilities.
Pre-selection by recording
Terms & conditions TBA.
Queries to info@cesarfranckconcours.nl
cesarfranckconcours.nl

Longwood Gardens International Organ Competition

Dates June 2022
Location Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, USA. Aeolian organ (1930; rebuilt 2004-11)
Prizes Pierre S. du Pont 1st prize US\$40,000, contract with Phillip Truettbrod Concert Artists, performance at Longwood Gardens in the year following the competition. Firmin Swinnen 2nd prize US\$15,000; Clarence Snyder 3rd prize US\$5,000; Audience Choice prize US\$1,000; AGO Philadelphia Chapter prize US\$1,000 (recognising outstanding performance of the judges' choice piece)
Eligibility Open to competitors aged 18-30.
longwoodgardens.org

International Organ Competition 'Paul-Hofhaimer-Prize'

Dates September 2022
Location Innsbruck, Austria
Prizes 1st prize €5,000; 2nd prize €3,500; 3rd prize €2,000.
Eligibility Organists of any country born in or after 1987.
Queries to Musikschule der Stadt Innsbruck, ref. Paul-Hofhaimer-Wettbewerb, Innrain 5, 6020 Innsbruck, Austria; +43 512 585425, hofhaimer-wettbewerb@innsbruck.gv.at
bit.ly/2y1V04O

CHORAL

9th Roma Music Festival 2020

Dates 11-15 March 2020
Location Rome, Italy
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to post@mrf-musicfestivals.com
mrf-musicfestivals.com

'Golden Voices of Montserrat' 2020 - International Choir Festival & Competition

Dates 23-26 March 2020
Location Costa Brava, Spain
Queries to +49 228 289860-11, info@musicultur.com
musicultur.com

International Youth Choir & Music Festival - Young2020Bohemia Prague

Dates 26-29 March 2020
Location Prague, Czech Republic
Eligibility Children's and youth choirs of any nationality.
Contact +49 228 289860-11, info@musicultur.com
musicultur.com

XXIII 'Rainbow' International Festival & Choir Competition

Dates 29-31 March 2020
Location St Petersburg, Russia
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Contact +7 9214004524
nw.choir.association@gmail.com
choirlab.ru/rainbow

International Choir Festival and Competition Verona 2020

Dates 1-5 April 2020
Location Verona, Italy
Contact +49 228 289860-11, info@musicultur.com
musicultur.com

Vox Lucensis

Dates 4-8 April 2020
Location Lucca, Italy
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to +49 6404 69749-25, mail@interkultur.com
interkultur.com

16th International Choir Festival & Competition

Dates 5-9 April 2020
Location Riva Del Garda, Italy
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to info@meeting-music.com
meeting-music.com



▲ The Belgian cities of Antwerp and Ghent host the 2020 World Choir Games

International Leevi Madetoja Male Voice Choir Competition 2020

Dates 17-19 April 2020
Location Tampere, Finland
Eligibility Male voice choirs of any nationality.
Queries to Finnish Male Choir Association (Suomen Mieskuoroliitto), Klaneettitie 6-8, 00420 Helsinki, Finland, +358 1 0820 0236, toiminnanjohtaja@mieskuoro.fi
mieskuoro.fi/madetoja2020

Slovakia Cantat

Dates 23-26 April 2020
Location Bratislava, Slovakia
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to Bratislava Music Agency, Slovakia, info@choral-music.sk
choral-music.sk

15th International Choir Competition & Festival Bad Ischl

Dates 23 April-3 May 2020
Location Bad Ischl, Austria
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to +49 6404 69749-25
mail@interkultur.com
interkultur.com

66th Cork International Choral Festival

Dates 29 April-3 May 2020
Location Cork, Ireland
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality; Fleischmann International Trophy: choirs of international standing of 20-60 voices.
Prizes Fleischmann International Trophy for competing choirs; event also open to non-competing choirs
Closing date 31 October 2019
Queries to +353 21 4215125, info@corkchoral.ie
corkchoral.ie

◀ **Venezia in Musica – International Choir Festival & Competition**

Dates 1-5 May 2020
Location Venice, Italy
Queries to +49 6403 9784225, info@meeting-music.com
meeting-music.com

22nd International Šimkus Choir Competition

Dates 14-17 May 2020
Location Klaipėda, Lithuania
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to +39 061269021 simkus.competition.lt@gmail.com
aukuras.org/simkus

Cracovia Cantans 2020

Dates 4-8 June 2020
Location Krakow, Poland
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to +49 228 289860-11 info@musicultur.com
musicultur.com

Per Musicam ad Astra – 8th International Copernicus Choir Festival & Competition

Dates 10-14 June 2020
Location Torun, Poland
Queries to meeting music, Konrad Adenauerstr. 36, 35415 Pohlheim, Germany, +49 6403 9784225, info@meeting-music.com
meeting-music.com

Bratislava Choir Festival 2020

Dates 11-14 June 2020
Location Bratislava, Slovakia
Eligibility Choirs of all ages of any nationality.
Queries to Bratislava Music Agency, Slovakia, info@choral-music.sk
choral-music.sk

Sing Berlin! International Choir Festival & Competition 2020

Dates 24-28 June 2020
Location Berlin, Germany
Queries to meeting music, Konrad Adenauerstr. 36, 35415 Pohlheim, Germany, +49 6403 9784225, info@meeting-music.com
meeting-music.com

Llangollen 2020

Dates 7-12 July 2020
Location Llangollen, Wales
Eligibility Choirs of all ages of any nationality.
Queries to +44 1978 862003, music@llangollen.net
eisteddfodcompetitions.co.uk

11th World Choir Games

Dates 5-15 July 2020
Location Antwerp/Ghent, Belgium
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to +49 6404 69749-25 mail@interkultur.com
interkultur.com

11th Musica Eterna a Roma – International Choir Festival & Competition

Dates 11-15 July 2020
Location Rome, Italy
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to meeting music, Konrad Adenauerstr. 36, 35415 Pohlheim, Germany, +49 6403 9784225, info@meeting-music.com
meeting-music.com

Grand Prix Thailand 2020

Dates 15-22 July 2020
Location Pattaya, Thailand
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to +420 606 082 266 info@festamusical.com
festamusical.com

Bratislava Cantat I. 2020

Dates 27-30 July 2020
Location Bratislava, Slovakia
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to Bratislava Music Agency, Slovakia, info@choral-music.sk
choral-music.sk

Bratislava Cantat II. 2020

Dates 8-11 October 2020
Location Bratislava, Slovakia
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Deadline 1 August 2020
Queries to Bratislava Music Agency, Slovakia, info@choral-music.sk
choral-music.sk

CHORAL – FUTURE COMPETITIONS

Budapest International Choir Festival & Competition

Dates 28 March – 1 April 2021
Location Budapest, Hungary
Queries to meeting music, Konrad Adenauerstr. 36, 35415 Pohlheim, Germany, +49 6403 9784225, info@meeting-music.com
meeting-music.com

7th Vietnam International Choir Competition

Dates 8-12 April 2021
Location Hoi An, Vietnam
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to +49 6404 69749-25, mail@interkultur.com
interkultur.com

Cornwall International Male Choral Festival

Dates 29 April – 3 May 2021
Location Cornwall, UK
Eligibility Adult choirs/ensembles 40 voices and under; adult choirs 41 voices and over; boys and youth male choirs. Minimum of 12 singers.
Queries to Gareth Churcher, artistic director, Cornwall Music Service Trust, Truro School, Trennick Lane, Cornwall TR1 1TH, +44 1872 246043, director@cimcf.uk
cimcf.uk

CantaRode

Dates 13-16 May 2021
Location Kerkrade, Netherlands
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to info@cantarode.nl
cantarode.nl

Salzburg International Choral Celebration & Competition

Dates 17-21 June 2021
Location Salzburg, Austria
Eligibility Choirs of all kinds of any nationality.
Queries to meeting music, Konrad Adenauerstr. 36, 35415 Pohlheim, Germany, +49 6403 9784225, info@meeting-music.com
meeting-music.com


15th Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival Vienna

Dates 2-7 July 2021
Location Vienna, Austria
Eligibility Children's and youth choirs of any nationality.
Queries to Columbus Ihr Reisebüro GmbH & CoKG, Universitätsring 8, 1010 Vienna, office@scsfestival.org
scsfestival.org

▼ Young singers from around the world take to the stage at the Summa Cum Laude festival



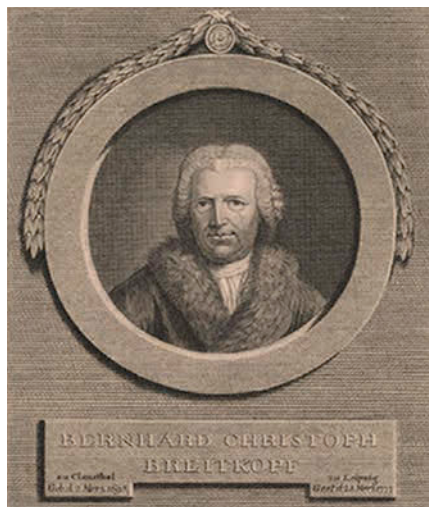
MANZANOIMAGES.COM



▼ Michal Nesterowicz conducts Vadim Gluzman and the HR Symphony Orchestra in Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto at the gala concert in Wiesbaden on 26 January 2019, to open the tercentenary celebrations of Breitkopf & Härtel

Scoring points

Breitkopf & Härtel has been celebrating its 300th anniversary in 2019 with a series of concerts, presentations and publications, rounding off the year with a conference in December on the firm's history. **Stephen Pritchard** trawls through the archives of the world's first music publisher. IMAGES COURTESY BREITKOPF & HÄRTEL



▲ (from left) Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, who founded the business in 1719 after marrying Sophia Maria Müller and inheriting an existing print shop; Johann Gottlob Immanuel Breitkopf, born in the year the firm was launched, joined the family business and took over as director in 1745, introducing moveable type technology into the operation, the first full-length work to be published thus being the pastoral drama *Il trionfo della fedeltà* (below, left) by Electress Maria Antonia Walpurgis of Saxony; Gottfried Christian Härtel took over the firm in 1796 and two years later co-founded the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (below, right) one of the 19th century's most important music journals; in 1807 he began to manufacture pianos, which were highly regarded during the 19th century, including by Franz Liszt and Clara Schumann



Glance along your music shelves at home. There will no doubt be many dog-eared copies of favourite pieces, perhaps loved for decades. Some were difficult to master; others still stubbornly refuse to be conquered. Each represents a small milestone in your musical development and each contains memories of tiny triumphs or performances perhaps best forgotten. But whatever their associations, we rarely dwell on how the music actually got on to those pages and who was first to show faith in the composer and launch their work into the world, perhaps hundreds of years ago.

Eager to get on with playing or singing, we push past the opening page, merely noting that it's an edition from, say Novello, Boosey & Hawkes, Faber, OUP or Chester. Or maybe it's from Bärenreiter, or perhaps the great-grandfather of them all, Breitkopf & Härtel (B&H) now celebrating its 300th anniversary, confirming its place as the world's oldest music publisher.

Most of the great names in classical music have appeared in the Breitkopf catalogue in more than 100,000 separate editions, so it can surely claim to have had a profound influence on musical development and taste throughout the western world.

B&H's new edition of Beethoven's 'Choral' Symphony – out next year to coincide with the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth – reminds us that this firm has been at the forefront of every iteration of 'new' music. Beethoven entrusted 25 first editions to the publisher, writing: 'It is no exaggeration when I tell you that I prefer dealing with you above all others.'

The company began life as a Leipzig book and bible publisher in 1719, two years after the marriage of Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf to Maria Sophie Müller, a widow with her own printing business (which itself dated back to 1504). An early venture into music publishing produced Schemelli's *Musicalisches Gesang-Buch* in 1736, which opened with this preface: 'This

Musical Song Book contains some melodies newly composed by the honourable Mr Johann Sebastian Bach, Electoral Saxon Kapellmeister and Director Chori Musici in Leipzig, and in some of which he has improved the thorough bass.' Which of those songs were actually by Bach has provided musicologists with hours of argument ever since.

Johann Gottlob Breitkopf joined his parent's firm after university and revolutionised music printing with moveable type, prompting the decision in 1754 to go into music printing and publishing permanently. Johann Gottlob developed a friendship with Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, leading the house to publish his work right up until his death in 1788.

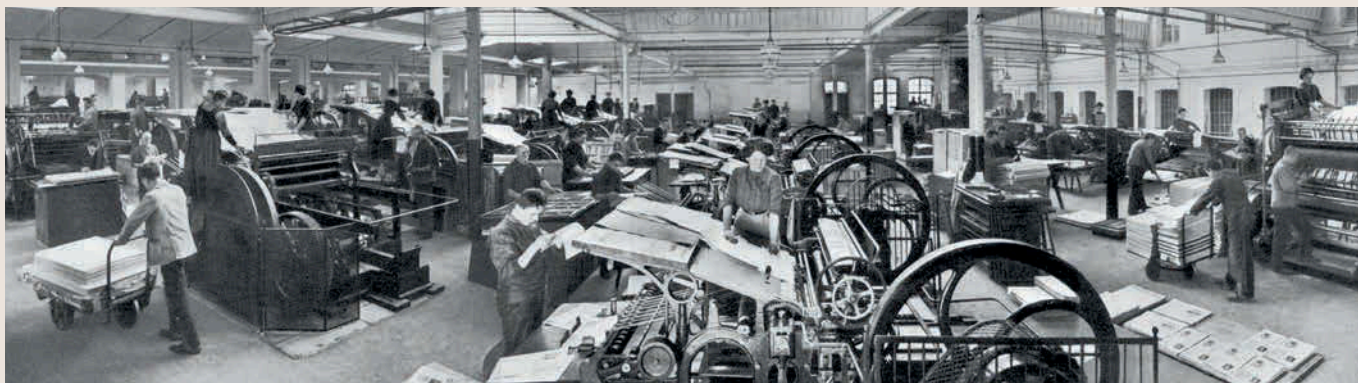
As music became more intricate, so typesetting proved increasingly complicated. Engraving had offered a more straightforward solution, punching staves and notes on to sheets of metal. Johann Gottlob revived moveable type by casting small portions of notes and staves made to a uniform measure that could be more easily manipulated. (Back in 1495, Wynkyn de Worde, working in London's Fleet Street, had printed a tune of eight notes by improvising five short printing 'rules' as a staff and the square under-surface of individual type characters as the notes. A neat, if crude, solution.)

The Härtel name was added in 1795 when Gottfried Christoph Härtel took control. These were also the Beethoven years, with publication of first editions of his chamber music and the fifth and sixth symphonies; but not content with merely publishing music, in 1798 Härtel established the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (*AmZ*), a weekly journal that was to have significant influence on musical taste for the next century, with famous critics E.T.A. Hoffman and Eduard Hanslick among its contributors. It was not, however, totally distant from the wilder shores of popular journalism: its first editor wrote a series of anecdotes about Mozart that are now widely regarded as products of his fevered imagination. That must have caused some friction with Mozart's widow, Constanze, yet

▼ As his business flourished, in 1732 Bernhard Christoph commissioned the building of the 'Zum goldenen Bären' ('At the Golden Bear') house in Leipzig's Universitätsstrasse (bottom); the publishing works moved in there in 1736. Ten years later, the proprietor bought the house opposite and the adjacent corner house, and had them rebuilt as 'Zum silbernen Bären' ('At the Silver Bear'), completed in 1767 (far left). The main store, printing press, type foundry, paper mill, and bookstore remained in the 'Golden Bear', while the new building housed another section of the print shop as well as providing accommodation for, among others, Immanuel Breitkopf's family and the copper engraver Johann Michael Stock. The 'Silver Bear' was sold in 1794 and replaced a century later by a modern building, which, like the 'Golden Bear', was destroyed by RAF bombing during the second world war



The Breitkopf & Härtel Leipzig factory in 1913



◀ nevertheless the publishing house ‘most sincerely’ beseeched ‘Madame’ Mozart, ‘that you would be so kind as to let us know what of your husband’s genuine compositions, not yet engraved, are still in your hands.’ There followed the first volume of the composer’s 17-volume complete works. When publication of the Requiem was announced in 1799 in the *AmZ*, Constanze wrote to Breitkopf & Härtel: ‘You have performed a miracle, awakened a dead man.’

Much in the way that Johann Gottlob had developed friendships with the composers he published, Härtel’s son Hermann – who took over in 1835 with his brother Raymund – was a close friend of Schumann and Mendelssohn, both of whom lived and worked in Leipzig. Relations were not always entirely smooth. The serenity of Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto in E minor, for instance, belies its rocky inception. It finally came off the press on 1 June 1845 after several interventions from the composer, which must have tested that friendship: on 22 March he wrote to Härtel: ‘There are still very many errors in the galley proofs of the violin concerto (not merely due to all sorts of changes that were my fault), bad ones that were not through my fault.’ It nevertheless went on to be one of the jewels in the Breitkopf catalogue, as did Mendelssohn’s great oratorio, *Elijah*.

That work, of course, was composed in the spirit of J.S. Bach, the figure who towers over all music in Leipzig. In 1850, Herman and Raymund decided to publish Bach’s entire output in the first of their *Gesamtausgaben* (Complete Works Editions), still being produced today. A new Breitkopf Urtext edition of Bach’s complete organ works, available in 10 volumes, came out in 2018, 40 years after the last edition. B&H says the new set reflects more recent research and historically informed performance practice, and it takes into consideration practical matters, such as convenient page-turns and legibility of layout. The Bach set sits alongside a veritable sweetshop of complete works for organ by, for example, Sweelinck, Handel, Nicolaus Bruhns, Johann Ludwig Krebs, Franz Tunder, Vincent Lübeck, Mendelssohn and Johann Nepomuk David.

Schumann recommended the early works of the 20-year-old Brahms to Breitkopf in 1853, and their publication helped establish his reputation at a crucial stage in his career. By 1870, the company was being run by Oskar van Hase and Wilhelm Volkmann, Hermann Härtel’s nephews. They promoted the works of Busoni and Sibelius, but things were not so fortunate for Mahler, who was rejected when he approached them in 1896 to publish his symphonies. The company is making amends this year by producing a new edition of all his symphonies to mark its anniversary.

In the 20th century B&H strove to stay ahead with the latest music while, like the rest of Germany, suffering first in the economic upheaval after the first world war and then the catastrophic destruction of the second world war. Leipzig was home to the Junkers aircraft factory and as a result suffered repeated allied ▶



▲ The firm published works by the leading composers of the day, including J.S. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Wagner and Brahms. During the 19th century it published the first collected editions of Bach (the Bach-Gesellschaft edition), Mozart (the Alte Mozart-Ausgabe) and Schubert (Franz Schubert's Werke or the Alte Gesamt-Ausgabe)



▲ As the Red Army arrived in Leipzig in 1945, the then director, Hellmuth von Hase, removed the company to Wiesbaden, where its headquarters remain, now under the direction of Nick Pfefferkorn (right)

◀ bombing. In December 1943, the publishing premises were destroyed, along with valuable archives and autograph scores.

In an interview with the Italian magazine *Archi*, today's publishing director, Nick Pfefferkorn, described how the company was determined to rise from the ruins. When the Red Army arrived in Leipzig in 1945, the then director, Hellmuth von Hase, took the company to Wiesbaden. 'He moved with three trucks, taking his wife, three daughters, a secretary and two copies of every available title and, when they arrived in Wiesbaden as refugees, literally everything was thrown on the sidewalk. No roof over their heads, no food, no nothing. At this point, nobody knew that Germany would be divided into the east and west and Hase had always planned to move back to Leipzig as soon as the Russian Army had left. As we know, that only happened in 1989, ten years after Hase's death.'

Even today, B&H is still striving to fill the gaps left by the war's destruction, while continuing to add the latest contemporary composers to its roster. And, despite those gaps, it is opening its archives for a new series of Breitkopf Originals, reprints of scores going back to the early days of the company, beginning with Beethoven string quartets and other chamber music – all part of a celebratory year that has included concerts and talks and will conclude with a conference in Leipzig this month (6-8 December) on the history of the firm and its place in western music.

And what of works for choir and organ today? Florian Kleidorfer of B&H says the firm 'likes to publish vocal and organ works from all the composers we are currently working with' and lists Martin Smolka, Adriana Hölszky and Isabel Mundry as particularly interesting in this field. And he notes that an organ piece entitled *Lar II* by J.M. Sánchez-Verdú, premiered in Berlin this year, is in their catalogue. Fittingly, it was the compulsory piece for entrants in a competition at the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Conservatory, an institution named after that genius Leipzig composer – and most perversity of proof-readers. ■

A new chronicle, Breitkopf & Härtel – 300 Jahre europäische Musik- und Kulturgeschichte ('300 Years of European Musico-Cultural History', edited by Thomas Frenzel; ISBN 978-3-7651-0485-5, 504 pages incl. 600 illustr.) was launched on 18 October (available only in German, €78 until 31 December, then €98, from breitkopf.com).

Stephen Pritchard writes on music for the Observer and the classical music website Bachtrack. He trained at Portsmouth Cathedral and sings with the English Chamber Choir.

Schools of thought

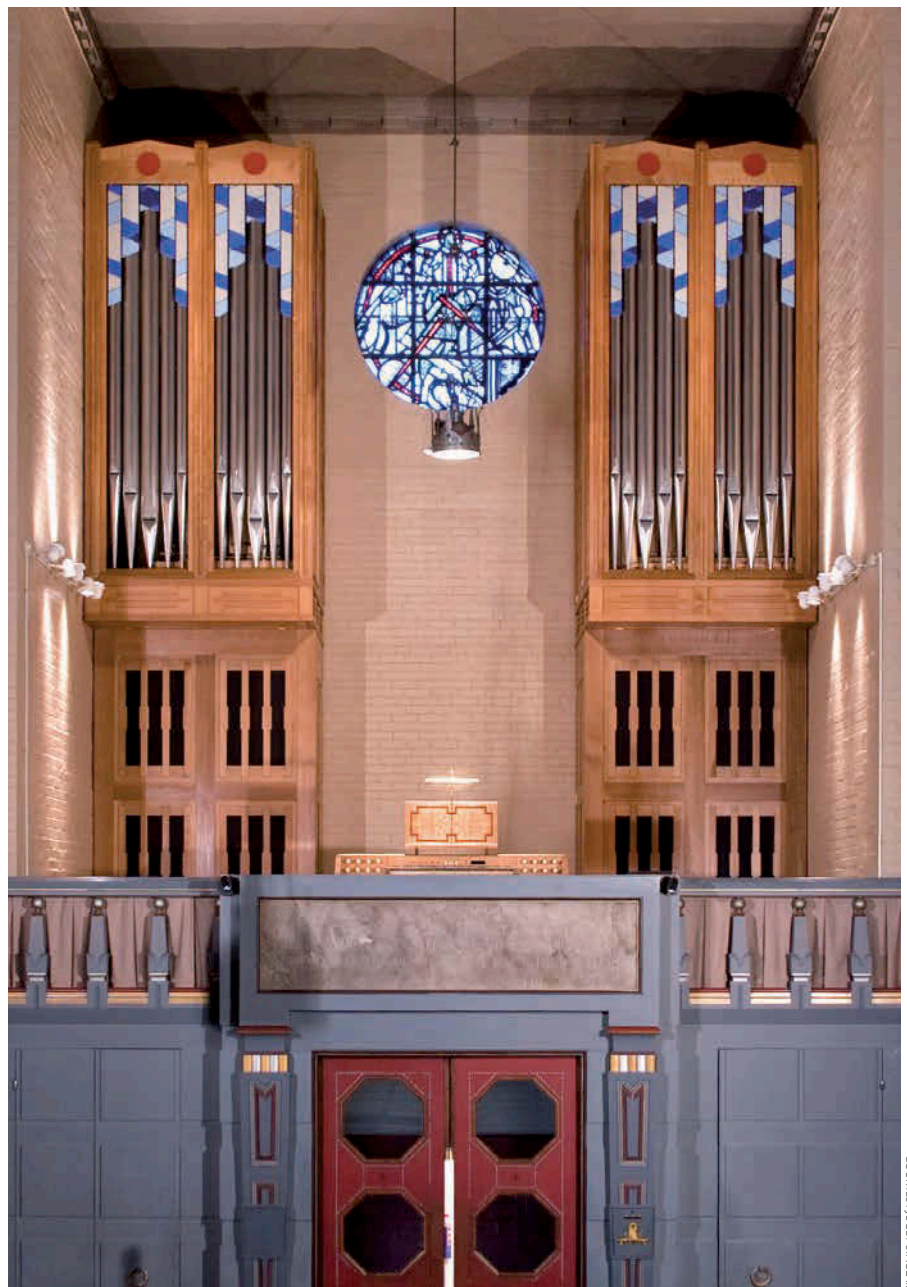
The 20th century showed a switch of focus to France, writes **Jonathan Ambrosino** in the third part of his series on North American organ building

part 3 French influences as a source of inspiration

French influence in non-French organ building could fill an entire treatise, to the extent that one should remember a time when things French barely factored into Anglo-American organ thinking. In the US, a rare exception proves the point: the occasional purchase of reeds from Zimmerman in Paris by both Hook & Hastings and Roosevelt for certain stops. But both builders were far more aligned in the 1870s with German thinking. The Casavant brothers had truer links to France in their study, but it really never showed in their output — at least listening to their pre-war organs, strongly steeped in the Anglo-Germanic North American style of the time.

The more Germany tried to dominate the world, the less North American organists seemed interested in studying there. After the turn of the 20th century, Paris became the preferred destination, where the example of French instruments and repertoire bore a certain fruit in the minds of such players as Francis Snow (Boston), Seth Bingham (New York), and Alexander Russell (Syracuse and then Princeton / Wanamaker Stores). Similarly, it was the French who travelled to North America and came away struck by technological development, beginning with Guilmant in 1893 (Columbian Exposition) and 1904 (St Louis World's Fair), and Dupré's transcontinental tours of the 1920s. Viérne's 1927 run through Canada and the States left him so enamoured of electric action that he dreamt of a Skinner console at Notre-Dame de Paris.

► 'Relaxation, drive and colour' in Juget-Sinclair's Opus 32 (2009) for St Mark's Episcopal Church, Saint Louis



COURTESY JUGET-SINCLAIR

NORTH AMERICAN ORGAN BUILDING: 3

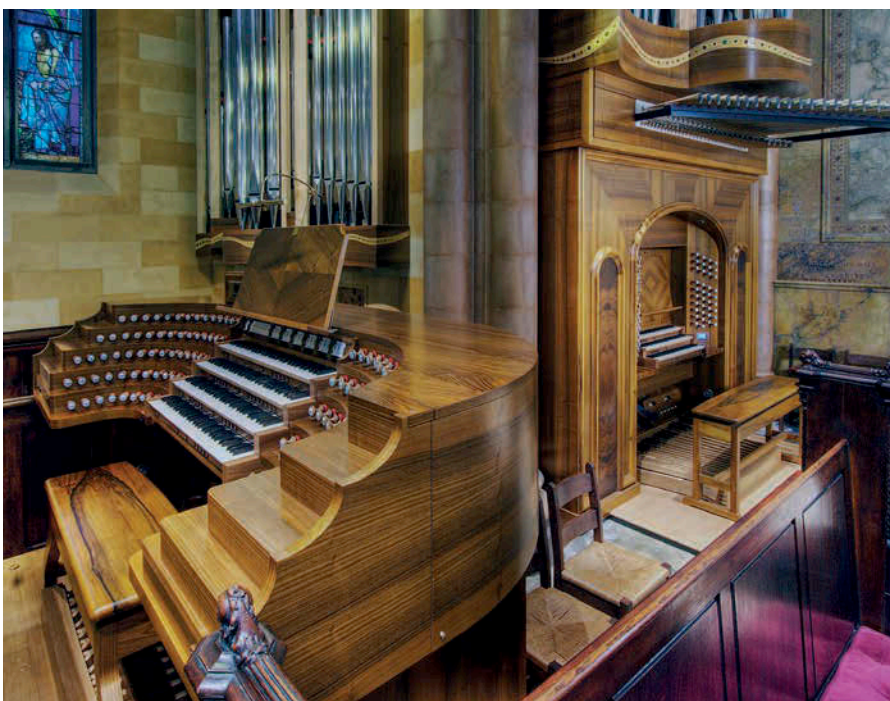
COURTESY THE SHEPHERD SCHOOL OF MUSIC



COURTESY CASAVANT FRÈRES



TOM LUGAVARI



▲ High points in French-type organs of the past decades (clockwise from top left): the 1997 Fisk-Rosales collaboration at Rice University in Houston; the 2006 Casavant at Brick Church, New York City; and the French organ Pascal Quoirin built for Church of the Ascension, New York City, in 2010

◁ Probably because of that history, and the enduring popularity of 20th-century French organ music, from about 1930 a strain of North American organist (Clarence Watters, William Self, Clyde Holloway, David Fuller, their spiritual progeny) has never entirely lost a desire that new organs will have some hint of French flavour, and perhaps more than a hint. From about 1980, serious US and Canadian study has yielded a far truer understanding of French organs of

all periods. High points along that trail have been Fenner Douglas's landmark *The Language of the French Classical Organ* (1995); an influential study of reed voices completed by Pierre Chéron; serious research of several builders, among them Fisk, Rosales, and Schoenstein; and, of course, organists heading for France.

High points in French-type organs of the past decades have been the 1997 Fisk-Rosales collaboration at Rice University in Houston;

the 2006 Casavant at Brick Church, New York City; and, also in New York, the actually French organ Pascal Quoirin built for Church of the Ascension in 2010. Now 22 years later, Rice wears unevenly. A compelling instrument with much beautiful voicing and excellent reeds, nevertheless it tends to overpower its small concert hall in a manner one rarely encounters in France. Brick Church's essay is more skilfully positioned for timelessness, plenty climactic but with richer *piano* and *mezzo* options that belie an understanding of the modest surroundings. Ascension has worn mostly well, and shares a similar sense of initial restraint to Brick Church, though with classical, not romantic voicing. Although many factors informed its design, its Frenchness lies more in a general aesthetic than any individual driving desire, and is comfortable being a 21st-century *mélange*.

Fisk has done a few recent essays in French style, such as the dramatic organ for Plymouth Congregational in Seattle (featured here in May/June 2016), but of late the shop has mostly returned to their trademark eclecticism. The 2018 Dobson at Saint Thomas, New York, climaxes at a kind of ripping Frenchness, but the organ starts at, and heads through, terrain altogether more Anglo-American. Thus, if French is the goal, the most interesting North American work along those lines is being done by Noack Organ Company and Juget-Sinclair.

Fritz Noack was a pioneer of the neo-classical tracker revival, and until the early 1980s his cases, stoplists, and voicing reflected that ethos. Didier Grassin, a talented designer formerly of Mander and Casavant, joined the firm in 2011, and rose to president in 2015 at Fritz Noack's retirement. A collaboration with French builder Bertrand Cattiaux has produced a new showcase instrument in Washington, D.C., at St Peter's Catholic Church, which seats about 700 and is copiously reverberant. The church's musician, Kevin O'Brien, spent years talking through the project with a number of builders, and settled on Noack in a desire to add something fresh to the Washington scene, not merely suited to his church's music programme (which, atypically for a US Catholic parish, has a serious choral emphasis) but also expanding the gallery of interesting organs that has arrived in the District over the past 20 years.

► Noack's Opus 162 for St Peter's on Capitol Hill, Washington D.C. fuses early Cavaillé-Coll with a modern stoplist

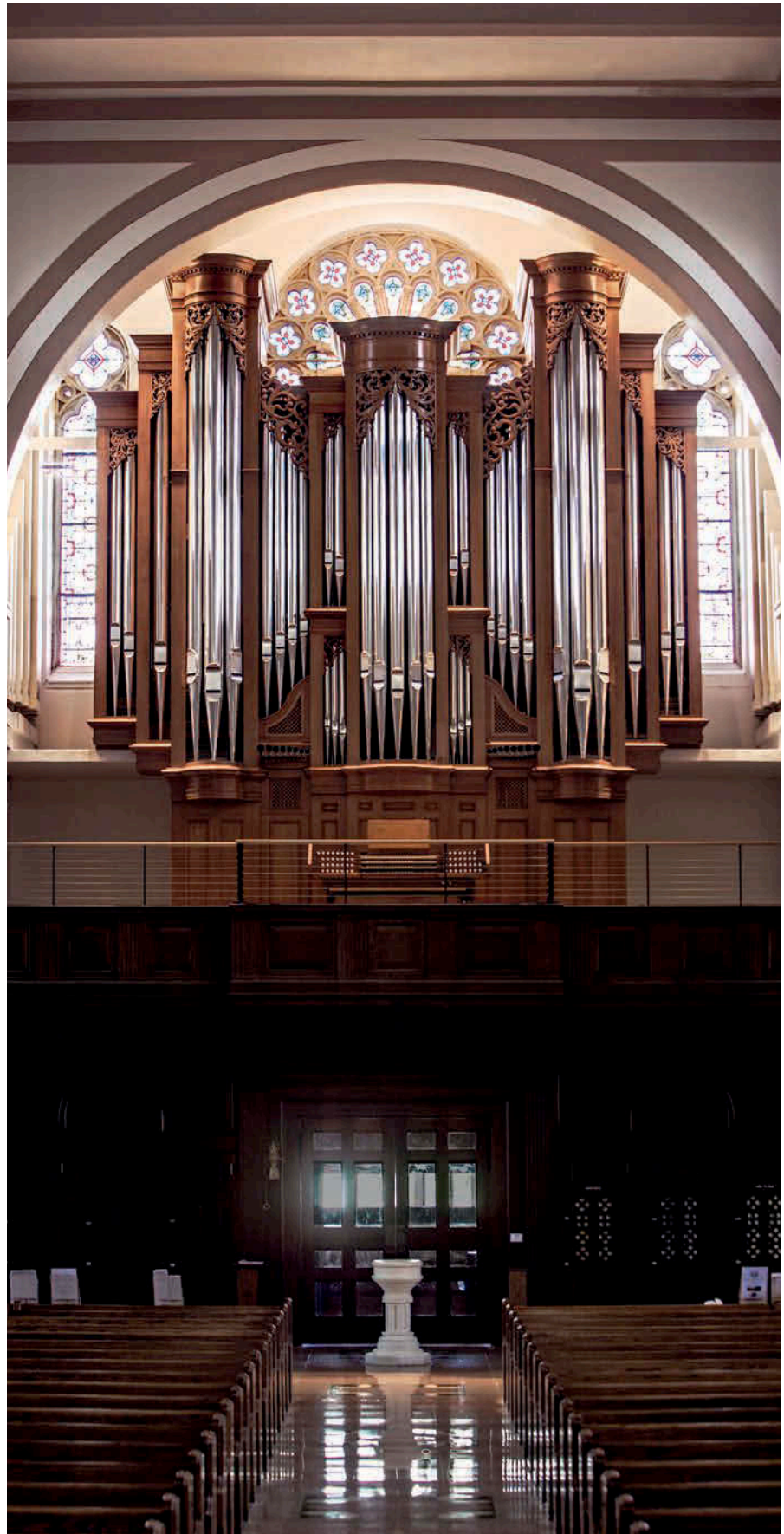
Opus 162 for Washington fuses a desire for the earliest form of Cavaillé-Coll into a stoplist of more modern framework: enclosed Choir with mutations, some Pedal borrows, short-compass Chamade. In practice, however, earlier Cavaillé-Colls such as St Omer (1855) or Santa María del Coro in San Sebastian (1862) aren't really evoked, but something a bit older in feel. The principal voicing is loose and undriven, some articulation here and there, with an effect perhaps more flexible than focused, upperwork fresh and jangly. Flutes are excellent, articulation present but not overt;

The voices combine into something of grand, cranky frisson

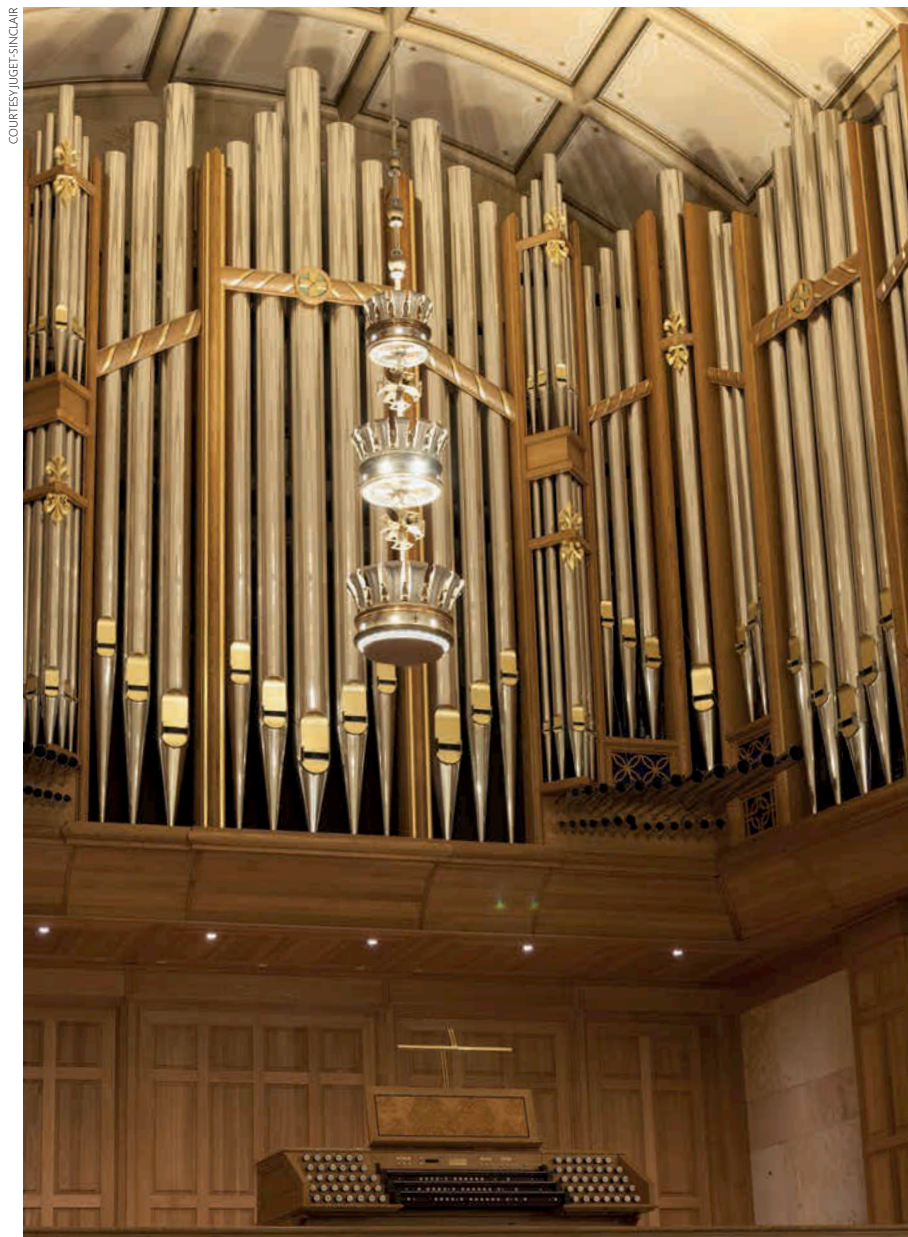
the unbearded strings, once they settle down, have a zesty pan-pipe quality one rarely hears. What resharpens the instrument are fine reeds, well balanced to each other and the flues. Here is an organ in which each voice lifts not one ounce more than it must, yet combines into something of grand, cranky frisson. An approachable key-action and unruffled detached console complete the picture.

This latest Noack reflects an ongoing evolution at Noack, as Didier Grassin reshapes the firm together with newly arrived ex-Fisk voicer Nami Hamada. Noack's next large contract, 56 stops for a Catholic cathedral in Birmingham, Alabama, will see Hamada taking control of the tonal direction. In this and other prospects, the company seems poised for an interesting future.

While such an evolution may still be in process with Juget-Sinclair in Montreal, it has been longer in the making and seems more rooted. Founded in 1995, the firm built its reputation with appealing studio organs, in which sensibility was always finely balanced to warmth, an 8ft open register always present. Their first larger-scale organ, with 34 stops, was completed in 2006 for Wellesley, Massachusetts. While attractive and innately musical, this one-organ rodeo is probably too much for its setting. The shop's ►



DON JONATHAN



▲ A milestone of appealing good taste and ingenuity: Juget-Sinclair's Opus 42 for Christ the King, Dallas (2014), modifies 'French drama' for accompanimental use

work since then has been on a trajectory of poetic refinement without losing drama or satisfying climax.

For a long while in US organ building, much faith rested in the personalities behind the sound: larger-than-life, deeply intelligent and articulate people such as Charles Fisk or John Brombaugh, Manuel Rosales or Jack Bethards. Dogma is the handmaiden of the strong-minded, and perhaps inevitably, some instruments didn't rise to the level of the rhetoric. The three principals at Juget-Sinclair – Denis Juget, Stephen Sinclair, Robin Côté – could not be further from such a description.

Redolent in some ways of Didier Grassin's approach with projects and staff, the leaders of Juget-Sinclair have found a way to manage passion without polemic, avoiding kitsch or many of the pitfalls of copy-work. Even as their instruments hew closely to a broad French ideal, a personality is unmistakable, but one's expectations of the work itself isn't freighted down by any dogma of what the instruments are supposed to achieve.

Wellesley and the early house organs showed voicing promise, but also roughness too, particularly in basses and reeds. By 2009, and the organ for St Mark's Church, Saint

Louis, the tone and evenness had become more refined without losing any sense of energy or personality. Saint Louis puts Wellesley's cowboy on an Arabian steed, and gives it a high placement in grand acoustics worthy of the approach. Nothing about the design, action, or voicing is flashy, and the style can't really be pinned down to classical or romantic, merely orthodox (there is no borrowing of any kind) and reasoned. The softer voices have relaxation, drive and colour in remarkable balance; one is as engaged playing the Swell 2ft down two octaves as any of the unison registers. And, it has the kind of tracker action that would have made a convert of Reginald Foort. Juget-Sinclair's 2014 opus at Christ the King, Dallas (written up here when new) was a milestone of appealing good taste and ingenuity, in which French drama was suitably modified for accompanimental use.

One curious hiccup was Juget-Sinclair's instrument for St Luke's Lutheran Church in Ithaca, New York, completed in 2017. Here is the French choir organ idea in maximum (22 stops), usefully sited in a rear gallery, but without acoustics to help. On its own terms, it's a lovely organ, more authentically in the Cavaillé-Coll mode than most of their work, with entirely mechanical key- and stop-action. It has the good key action one has come to expect, and further evolution of the voicing polish.

Yet the marriage of such an organ to such a room is like trying to partner a peacock to the family cow. Downstairs, the organ lacks bass impact, the voicing interest falls a little flat, and the tutti ends up sounding like a nervous attempt to overcome the impossible. To some extent, every organ needs acoustics to succeed, this one more than ever.

However, reports from their latest work in the Midwest have been promising, and they now have a healthy backlog of work, including three organs (chancel, west gallery, continuo) for the acoustically comely Catholic cathedral of Richmond, Virginia. As their stature rises, Juget-Sinclair seems to be commanding situations worthy of their talents and approach. ■

Jonathan Ambrosino is a Boston-based tuner-technician, who works nationally as a consultant and tonal finisher. He has written for Choir & Organ since 1998.

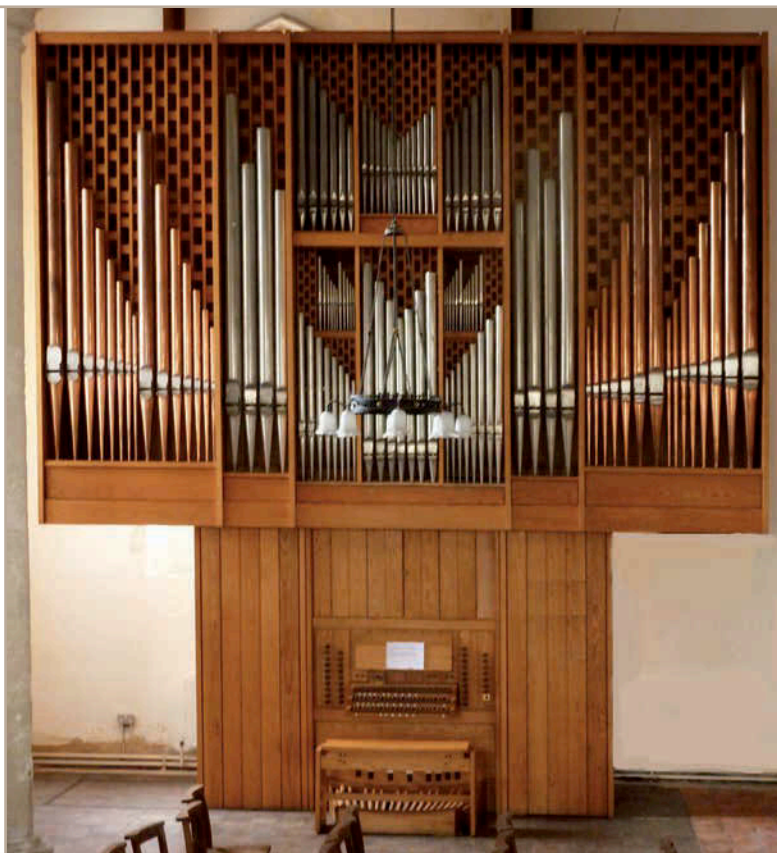
RECITAL ROUND-UP

GAINED IN TRANSLATION

Clare College, Cambridge organ tutor and *C&O* contributor Douglas Hollick will give the first in an occasional series of celebrity recitals on the Peter Collins/Cousans Organs instrument recently translated from the Turner Sims Concert Hall, Southampton to Orford Church in Suffolk (Sunday 1 December at 4pm). In Orford he will reprise Bach's Prelude & Fugue in A minor, BWV 543, which opened his first recital on the instrument back in 1988.

Hollick told *C&O*, 'I'm planning to play BWV 543 and Buxtehude's *Magnificat Primi Toni*, BuxWV 204 as bookends in a programme themed around the canticle by Melchior Schildt – his *Magnificat Primi modi* is a magisterial work of over 20 minutes, and one of the finest of the 17th-century north German repertoire – and sets of versets on the Magnificat from the French 18th century by Jean Adam Guilain and Michel Corrette; the Guilain has a most beautiful Tierce en Taille, and a supremely humorous Basse de Trompette, the Corrette a very impressive plein jeu with double pedal and a lovely Cromorne en Taille. I'll also be playing settings of *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* by Hieronymus Praetorius and Bach. The programme will allow me to use all the colour of the Collins organ fully, and it will be lovely to play it again, in much more suitable acoustics!' Tickets: £10/£8 from snapemaltings.co.uk; tel: 01728 687110.

► Elsewhere, in Leeds Town Hall Darius Battiwalla celebrates 250 years of French music (16 Dec); and cathedral opportunities to hear Messiaen's *La nativité* include Tom Winpenny (8 Dec, St Albans), Jonathan Hope (15 Dec, Gloucester), and Jeffrey Makinson at (22 Dec, Lincoln). And if you're still hungry for seasonal music, turn up at Chester Cathedral on Boxing Day for Philip Rushforth's recital which includes Alan Gray's *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, Gigout's *Rhapsodie sur des Noël*s, and Thomas Trotter's arrangement of Leroy Anderson's *Sleigh Ride*.



GRAEME KAY

Alton, St Lawrence at 8pm

David Poulter (3 Dec) 01420 543628

Birmingham Cathedral at 1.10pm

Ashley Wagner (2 Dec) 0121 262 1840

Birmingham Symphony Hall at 1pm

Thomas Trotter & Winchester Cathedral Choir (9 Dec)
0121 780 3333

Bradford Cathedral at 1pm

Thomas Leech (4 Dec), Andrew Bryden (11 Dec) 01274 777720

Bristol, St Mary Redcliffe at 1.15pm

Andrew Kirk (5, 12 Dec)
0117 231 0060

Buckfastleigh, Buckfast Abbey at 3pm

Matthew Searles (21 Dec)
01364 645500

Cheltenham College at 1.15pm

Alexander Ffinch (3 Dec)
01242 265600

Chester Cathedral at 1.10pm

Graham Eccles (5 Dec), Alexander Palotai (12 Dec), Andrew Wyatt (19 Dec), Philip Rushforth (26 Dec)
01244 500974

Colchester, Moot Hall at 1pm

Ian Ray (10 Dec) 01206 282230

Gloucester Cathedral at 6pm

Jonathan Hope (15 Dec) 01452 528095

Godalming, SS Peter & Paul at 1pm

John Belcher (6 Dec) 01483 414858

Grimsby Minster at 12.30pm

Ben Saul (5 Dec) 01472 277277

Guildford, Holy Trinity at 1.10pm

Peter Wright (11 Dec) 01483 567716

Huddersfield Town Hall at 1pm

Gordon Stewart (org), Tom Osborne (tpt) & Elinor Carter (sop) (2 Dec)
01484 221900

Hull City Hall at 12.30pm

Ian Hare (4 Dec) 01482 300306

Leeds Town Hall at 1.05pm

Darius Battiwalla (16 Dec)
0113 378 6600

Lincoln Cathedral at 5.30pm

Jeffrey Makinson (22 Dec)
01522 561 600

London EC2, St Lawrence Jewry at 1pm

Catherine Ennis (3, 10 Dec)
020 7600 9478

London EC4, St Paul's Cathedral at 4.45pm

Philip Moore (8 Nov), Simon Johnson (15 Nov) 020 7651 0898

London EC4, St Stephen Walbrook at 12.30pm

Martin Ellis (6 Dec) 020 7626 9000

London N1, Union Chapel at 6.30pm

Rachel Mahon (11 Dec)
020 7226 1686

London SW1, Westminster Abbey at 5.45pm

Matthew Jorysz (1 Dec), Alexander Hamilton (8 Dec), Michael Papadopoulos (22 Dec) 020 7222 5152

London W1, Grosvenor Chapel at 1.10pm

James Johnstone (3 Dec), Richard Hobson (17 Dec) 020 7499 1684

London W1, St George's, Hanover Square at 1.10pm

Timothy Easter (10 Dec)
020 7629 0874

London WC2, St Martin-in-the-Fields at 1pm

James Gough (16 Dec) 020 7766 1100

Newbury, St Nicolas at 1.10pm

Clive Grant (12 Dec) 01635 47018

Newcastle Cathedral at 1.05pm

Michael Haynes (2 Dec), Kris Thomsett (23 Dec), Charles Wooler (31 Dec) 0191 232 1939 (ext 209)

Newton Abbot, St Mary's Abbotsbury at 3pm

Wyn Turner (1 Dec) 01626 334357

Orford, St Bartholomew's at 4pm

Douglas Hollick (1 Dec)
01728 687110

Oxford, Merton College Chapel at 1.15pm

Kentaro Machida (5 Dec)
01865 276310

Oxford, The Queen's College Chapel at 1.10pm

Ben Horden (4 Dec) 01865 279120

Reading, Minster of St Mary the Virgin at 12.30pm

Relf Clark (13 Dec) 0118 957 1057

St Albans Cathedral at 5.15pm

Tom Winpenny (8 Dec) 01727 860780

Swansea, Brangwyn Hall at 12.45pm

Lesley Ryan (3 Dec) 01792 635432

Warwick, St Mary's at 1.15pm

Mark Swinton (20 Dec)
01926 403940 (ext.3)

For fuller listings, visit
www.choirandorgan.com

While every effort is made to provide correct information, readers are strongly advised to telephone the numbers given to confirm details before attending.

www.choirandorgan.com



Taking up dreams

The experiences of Roma children show that virulent racial discrimination is alive and very far from abating. **Clare Stevens** is impressed with a choral project in the Czech Republic that promotes pride in cultural identity

It would be hard to imagine a more exhilarating way of starting a conference, was the consensus around the ICC Belfast after the opening session of this year's conference of the Association of British Orchestras (ABO). The event began with a performance by the Čavorenge children's choir from the Czech Republic, accompanied by players from the

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. A roomful of classical music industry professionals were captivated by the gutsy, exuberant style of this unique group, enthusiastically getting to their feet to sing and clap along with the final song.

Čavorenge had been invited to Belfast to showcase a project that has emerged from the European Orchestra Laboratory,

an EU Creative Europe programme that is helping several orchestras to find new ways of reaching the public and involving their musicians more actively in outreach work. The choir was founded in 2010 by its conductor Ida Kellarová and is made up of children and young adults from the Czech Republic and Slovakia, many of them drawn from the impoverished and isolated

◀ Making a positive statement: Čhavorenge performing in the Rudolfinum concert hall, Prague



PETRA HÁSKA

Romani community. Čhavorenge means 'for the children'; Kellarová sees the choir as widening the horizons of its young members and providing them with a route out of poverty as well as a musical education.

The involvement of the Czech Philharmonic has brought a new dimension to its activities, including opportunities for the choir to perform on the prestigious stage of the Rudolfinum concert hall in Prague – a journey just as significant for the children as their expeditions further afield to Northern Ireland and, at the end of October, to the Fairfield Halls in Croydon, near London.

The Romani people are the biggest national minority in the Czech Republic, in 2016 numbering an estimated 245,000, or 2.3 per cent of the population and 9 per cent of the population of Slovakia. But the Czech Republic's annual government reports on 'the State of the Romani Minority' record that while half of them

are 'members of the intelligentsia and the middle class', they still suffer from discrimination on the basis of their origin; and the other half are marginalised and pushed to the outskirts of society. Orchestrated relocations of Romani people under previous regimes have created ghettos where families exist on very low

'We work with young Roma and help them get back to their culture and identity'

incomes or on social welfare, often in poor health. A large proportion of children end up segregated in what used to be called 'special schools' for those with 'mild mental disabilities', not because they have any actual disability, but because they come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, according to a report published by Amnesty International in 2010. Those Romani

children who do attend mainstream schools are inadequately supported and face other forms of discrimination and segregation.

Ida Kellarová has been working on behalf of the Romani community in her native country for many years. Originally trained as a cellist and pianist at the Janáček Conservatoire in Brno, she worked as a singer, actress and voice teacher in the UK and Scandinavia for most of the 1980s and 90s before returning to the Czech Republic after the Velvet Revolution. 'I was taken aback by the stifling racism and hatred that all at once came to the surface here. And instead of getting better with time, it is in fact getting worse and worse,' she says.

In 1999 she founded MIRET – the International Initiative for the Development of Ethnic Art – a charity with the aim of supporting the personal and creative growth of Roma children and young people, and presenting Roma culture at a professional level so that it can be appreciated and recognised by the whole of society.

'My father was a Roma,' Kellarová told the ABO conference. 'He was ashamed of being a gypsy, but he made me play the piano, bought me a cello for 50 kroner and sent me to music school to study classical music.' MIRET is her way of giving something back, nurturing a group of qualified teachers who understand Roma culture and how it can be developed.

'The creative team that has evolved in association with this younger generation is truly exceptional and is now an irreplaceable element in all of MIRET's ongoing projects,' she says. 'We are creating role models, which at the moment are sadly lacking in

Roma society. We put our greatest hopes in children and youth because it will fall on them to take up our dreams of changing the world for the better. We work with young Roma and help them get back to their culture and identity. We teach them how to integrate, not to assimilate, because there is a fundamental difference which children should be reminded of.'



▲ (top) MIRET runs performing arts summer camps for Roma and non-Roma children from disadvantaged backgrounds; (below) Ida Kellarová, who founded MIRET in 1999

Since 2002 MIRET has run summer camps in beautiful countryside locations for around 100 Roma and non-Roma children from children's homes and socially disadvantaged families. They take part in a variety of performing arts activities and are encouraged to communicate, care for one another and understand one another's cultural roots. The camps are now known as 'Romano Drom' – 'The Romani Way'.

From these camps grew Čhavorenge, a choir of around 100 young people personally selected by Kellarová from

Romani schools, municipalities and cities in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The focus of their repertoire is traditional Romani music, including many new songs and arrangements by Kellarová's husband, Desideria Dužda, a composer, guitarist and teacher who is also one of the choir's accompanists.

'Romani songs are the gem of the Romani culture and have magical power, manifesting the heart, soul and very nature of man and people,' says Kellarová. 'He who sings, creates – because a song is self-expression, a message.

'The Roma do not use sheet music for their songs; the characteristic free rhythms of half-tones and quarter-tones cannot even be recorded in the form of written notes. The song is based on an expressive delivery that cannot really be interpreted well without hearing the actual singer. It is characterised by complicated phrasing, prolonging, accelerating, pausing and inhaling. This adds unique magic to each song. In their ballads, the Roma sing about hardships, poverty, unfortunate love, infidelity, death of a close person, illness, parental anxiety, orphaned children, famine, prison, about their mothers and fathers.

'Romani folklore is alive and songs are constantly being created and inspired by real events. We consider the gift of song as one of the most beautiful gems that decorate the Romani culture.'

Performing with other musicians, including folk bands and local orchestras, has been part of the Čhavorenge experience from the start. In 2015 they gave a concert with the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra in a large radio studio in Bratislava. The Czech Philharmonic has been a patron of the choir since 2013, when musicians from the orchestra started visiting the Romano Drom camps to share their expertise with the children. This was followed by joint performances in some of the settlements, including Hermanovce, a collection of hovels built on the site of an old incineration area. 'When you come to a place like this, where there isn't even water, it makes you think how much you take for granted at home,' recalls violinist Magdalena Mašlanová. 'We only performed about five songs, but it was wonderful to see the happiness on the faces of the people.'

Kellarová admits that mustering enough children for showcase performances is often difficult – many of them drop out, usually for family reasons, which puts immense pressure on those who do take part. But those who have made the commitment to the choir are beginning to understand what it means to perform at a professional level, and to appreciate the difference between one instrumental ensemble and another.

In 2016 Čhavorenge and the Czech Students' Philharmonic took part in a series of concerts for primary and middle school

children, led by Kellarová and her artistic team. The final concert was open to the public and was a revelatory experience for many of the audience. 'I am really delighted that I could be part of it when children from ghettos, shelters and small villages performed at the Rudolfinum and the applause almost brought the roof down,' was one person's response. 'For us it was a chance to see these children and young people in a different context. And for those children it's an experience that will change the way they view themselves and how they deal with the outside world.'

Just a few weeks previously, however, some of the children from Čhavorenge had been on a treasure hunt as part of their summer camp when a local man flew out of his house and hurled racist insults at them; then a couple of days later the same man fired some shots towards them while they were doing their morning warm-up exercises. What made these frightening incidents even worse was that when Kellarová called the police, they refused to come out to the camp to investigate. A recording obtained by MIRET reveals that their response was: 'We are not going to play cowboys here.'

Kellarová recounts being with a group of children from the choir in a provincial restaurant, and seeing many of the other diners immediately grabbing their handbags; some even went out into a corridor and requested that the waiters should serve them there. On another occasion, before an outdoor concert she overheard an elderly lady in a café saying: 'I wonder what kind of a shambles those gypsies are going to make at the square again. It's a pity Hitler didn't live longer.' There is a long way to go before musicians from the Romani community will be accepted by the general public, even when they are children.

But the journey continues, gaining momentum with every public appearance. In June 2017 Čhavorenge and players from the Czech Philharmonic gave a series of concerts together in three different locations across the country, in each of them managing to connect Roma and non-Roma audiences. David Mareček, director of the orchestra, endorsed the importance of the project by declaring that 'we are proud of the Čhavorenge children for the incredible

amount of work they put in – Čhavorenge is today, in fact, the choir of the Czech Philharmonic. That gives me great pleasure!'

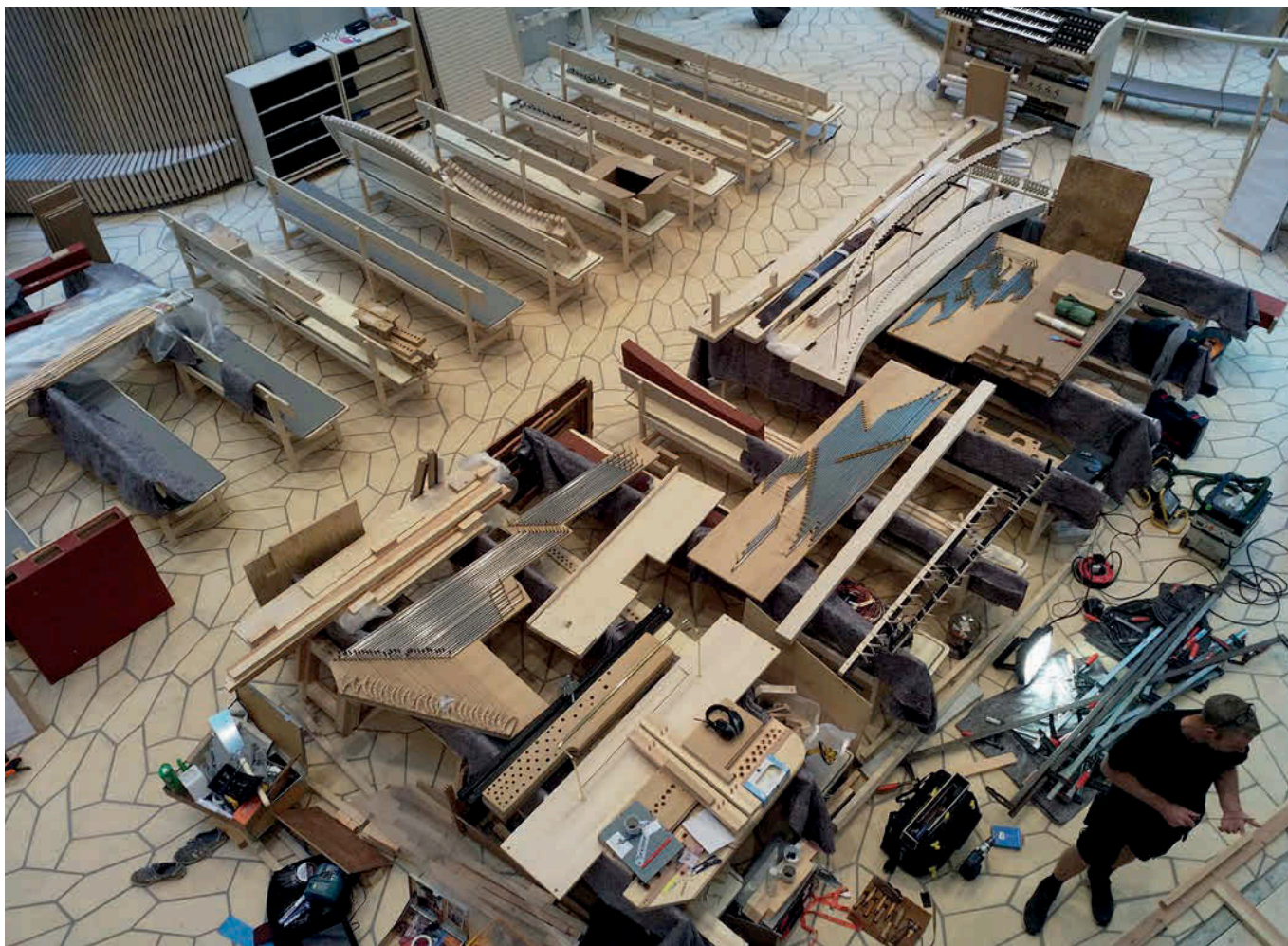
The last word should go to Ida Kellarová, however – 'Auntie Ida', as the children call her. 'I give all of these children a chance. Either they take it or their light goes out. Over the past 20 years I have met a lot of Roma children from poor backgrounds who were hurt so much by society's social exclusion and the stigma of being Roma that they hardened and were not able to grow any further. They quit working on themselves, stopped blossoming, and in the end their talent was useless. But I hope the experiences these children had with us will remain with them and that they will have functional families and want a better life for their own children.' ■

An hour-long film about Čhavorenge can be found on YouTube by searching for 'Ida's Idea (2016)'; www.kelarova.com, www.miret.cz, www.ceskafilharmonie.cz

Clare Stevens works as a writer, editor and publicist in the Welsh Marches, where she sings with Hereford Choral Society.

▼ Čhavorenge performs with the Czech Philharmonic, connecting Roma and non-Roma audiences





▲ Organ parts spread around Trekroner Kirke

Work in progress

The new home of Danish organ builder Frobenius & Sons keeps the north winds out and some intriguing projects in, writes **Andrew Mellor**.

WORKSHOP PHOTOS ANDREW MELLOR, ARCHIVE PHOTOS COURTESY FROBENIUS & SONS

It's an unusually chilly October day when I visit the workshop of Frobenius & Sons in Birkerød, north of Copenhagen. But there's no danger of the icy wind penetrating the premises: the company's home since Easter 2018 is an airtight modern building with UPVC windows, a long way from its historic former workshop in Lyngby. 'I was at the old premises yesterday, and it was painful,

because it was such a fantastic place,' says CEO Eskild Momme. 'But it was expensive to heat and renovate, and every time we had a wood delivery it blocked the road. It was a problem we needed to solve.'

Frobenius now employs 27 in Birkerød, with another four at a Jutland office in Horsens geared mainly to maintenance and tuning. The company is busy, which

reflects the investment Denmark makes in its state church (via a designated church tax), the traditional nature of the Lutheran liturgy and the seriousness with which it trains its organists. Momme teaches a course at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen, in which organ students are briefed in the basics of design and function: 'It's not teaching them how to maintain an

organ. It's just that an organ is a big machine: if something goes wrong at 9.45am on a Sunday morning and you know a little about it, you might be able to fix the problem in time for the service at 10am.'

Maintenance and tuning account for around half of the company's turnover, new-build instruments the other half. The company is working less abroad these days, in contrast to the 1970s when its neo-baroque tracker-action instruments were *de rigueur* in the UK, particularly in collegiate chapels. 'That's the way of the world,' says Momme, referencing high salaries and tax rates in Denmark. 'It's more expensive to buy an organ from us, because the cost of running a company here is so much higher.'

Nevertheless, Denmark's reputation for quality craftsmanship remains similarly high. 'Danish furniture has a deserved reputation for beauty,' says Momme, sitting on a Hans

Wegner chair (recently, the company has made a distinct effort to use more locally-sourced Scandinavian wood). 'We have worked with many of the classic Danish designers, so of course they have influenced the way we do things, our aesthetic and our craftsmanship. You see the difference in Danish furniture in comparison with German furniture, and it's the same with organs. And it's not just look, it's sound.'

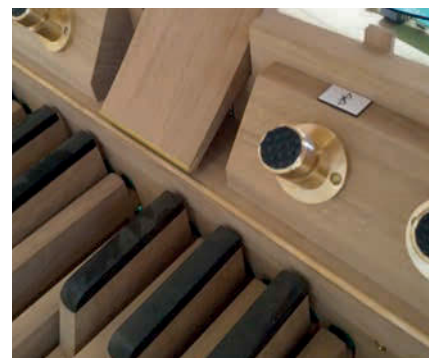
Outside Denmark, we would consider it a 'forward' sound, potent even, with its roots in the Organ Reform Movement. 'Our sound has changed down the years,' says Momme. 'It is certainly more gentle now. It was common to build instruments in the 1960s without Principal aid, but it's now acknowledged that you need that sound even on an organ of four stops.' So what makes Frobenius organs desirable in 2019? Momme points to the company's

experience: 'We know what works for the size of the church. We have all the scales, we know what to do in terms of wind pressure and stop provision. We hope to do a brilliant job every time, but at the very least it will be a good job.'

Down in the workshop, there are some intriguing projects under way. One is a new console for the Frobenius organ at Enghave Church in Copenhagen that comes with unusual features. The first is a hydraulic lift, which means the entire manual section of the console can be raised and lowered – a feature requested by 'Orgelklubben' ('The Organ Club'), an initiative which encourages children to take straight to the organ from the age of six. The console also includes a Bluetooth foot piston for turning pages on music read from an iPad.

In another room is an 1896 instrument by the now-defunct Danish builder Busch, >

▼ (clockwise, from below) The new console for Enghave Church, Copenhagen, part of which can be raised and lowered by a hydraulic lift, and includes a piston for turning pages; Frobenius CEO Eskild Momme in the voicing workshop; detail from the Enghave console; wooden pipes for an eight-stop organ for Hvannasund, Faroe Islands



Th. Frobenius & Sønner Orgelbyggeri – how it all began



▲▼ Theodor Frobenius in the Aarhus workshop (1908) and Lyngby (1953); (below) daughter Rita and son Erik established the Frobenius Trust, together with their brother Walther

Theodor Frobenius was born in Bavaria in 1885, the son of a winemaker. For four years he was apprenticed to the organ builder across the street from the family home, Laukhuff. Having set out to expand his knowledge at other German firms, Frobenius met the Danish organ builder A.C. Zachariassen, who soon returned to Denmark to take over an organ workshop in Aarhus, the country's second city.

Zachariassen was aware of Frobenius's uncommon talents and appetite for international experiences, and invited him to help out temporarily in Aarhus. While working on the instrument at Viborg Cathedral in central Jutland, Frobenius met and fell in love with a Dane. There was no going back to Germany.

In 1909, Copenhagen called. A piano manufacturer named Christian Winther wanted to supplement his firm with an organ department, and invited Frobenius to establish it. From an old mill in the Nørrebro district, Frobenius masterminded his Opus 1: a six-stop instrument for a church in Harboøre on the west coast of Jutland. Two small but notable instruments followed in Copenhagen: one for the Swedish Church, Gustafs Church, another for Godthåbs Church.

Frobenius was making a name for himself, and it became clear his activities were outgrowing the partnership with Winther. In 1917, the two split and Frobenius was born as an independent firm. By 1926, it had moved to the north Copenhagen suburb of Lyngby, where it remained until 2018.

Over the years, Frobenius & Sons established itself – with Marcussen & Sons –

as one of the foremost builders in Denmark. The firm has incorporated a number of competitors, including Horsens Orgelbyggeri (which now constitutes its Jutland office), Jensen & Thomsen and Carsten Lund. Theodor Frobenius stayed with the company as a voicer even after passing general management responsibilities on to his three children, Walther, Erik and Rita. Between them, they turned Frobenius & Sons into a limited company and later established the Frobenius Trust, which now owns the company outright and distributes its profits to good causes.

Theodor died in 1972 and the last of his offspring, Walther, in 2007. The third generation of Frobenius children declined the chance to manage the company, and Henning Jensen – founder of the Fyns Orgelbyggeri on the island of Funen – became the first non-Frobenius CEO. In 2017, he was replaced from the inside by company voicer and former professional singer Eskild Momme.

Frobenius instruments can be found in every Nordic country (including Iceland and the Faroe Islands), as well as in the US, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, and particularly in

the UK. Its most famous British commissions came from Kingston Parish Church, Canongate Church in Edinburgh, Lancing College, Oundle School, The Queen's College, Oxford, and Robinson College, Cambridge. In 1994, Frobenius relocated its 1965 organ for Copenhagen Cathedral to the Church of the Assumption in Tullamore, Ireland.

1972 saw the building of a 40-stop instrument for the First Congregational Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. That was followed 12 years later by a larger organ for the Mahikari Grand Shrine in Takayama, Japan. High profile instruments in Denmark include the cathedrals of Ribe and Aarhus, the latter the largest in Denmark and one of Theodor Frobenius's first major works, dating from 1928.

In 2018, after 92 years in Lyngby, the company moved to a modern building in nearby Birkerød, adjacent to the former workshop of the Carsten Lund company which it had long since acquired. Its latest instrument (Opus 1046), built for a new church in Trekroner outside Roskilde, will be inaugurated in March 2020.



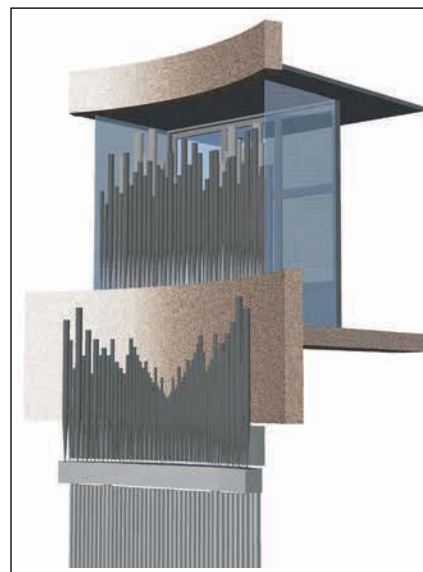
◀ undergoing full restoration following its removal from a Copenhagen church. It will become the second organ at Stege Church on the Danish island of Møn.

Occupying the central build area is the main frame of a new eight-stop instrument for Hvannasund on the Faroe Islands and 'the smallest church we have ever built in', according to Momme. The tiny gallery necessitates a pedal division without the customary Frobenius mechanical action that will sit perpendicular to the organ bench.

Of most interest, though, is a new instrument for an entirely new church. Trekroner is a suburb of Roskilde that has grown considerably due to the expansion of

Magle and Momme are proud to have resurrected a nearly extinct stop, the 8ft Flauto Amabile. 'There hasn't been one of these made in Denmark since 1916,' says Magle; 'It's very special, like a transverse flute. It's difficult to describe the sound because it doesn't sound like anything else.' The first octave is stopped, and at the highest registers the pipework turns to metal. 'It has this tenor and alto range, but we have purposefully placed a more normal Rørflojte [Rohrflöte] in the same division so they can supplement each other.'

Other unusual touches include a 'Rollschweller' for general crescendo, a full-bodied Pedal division with a trombone in full length (one of three 16ft ranks), and a



Trekroner Church, a concrete ellipse with no straight surfaces, proved a challenge, 'putting a very square organ into a very round space'

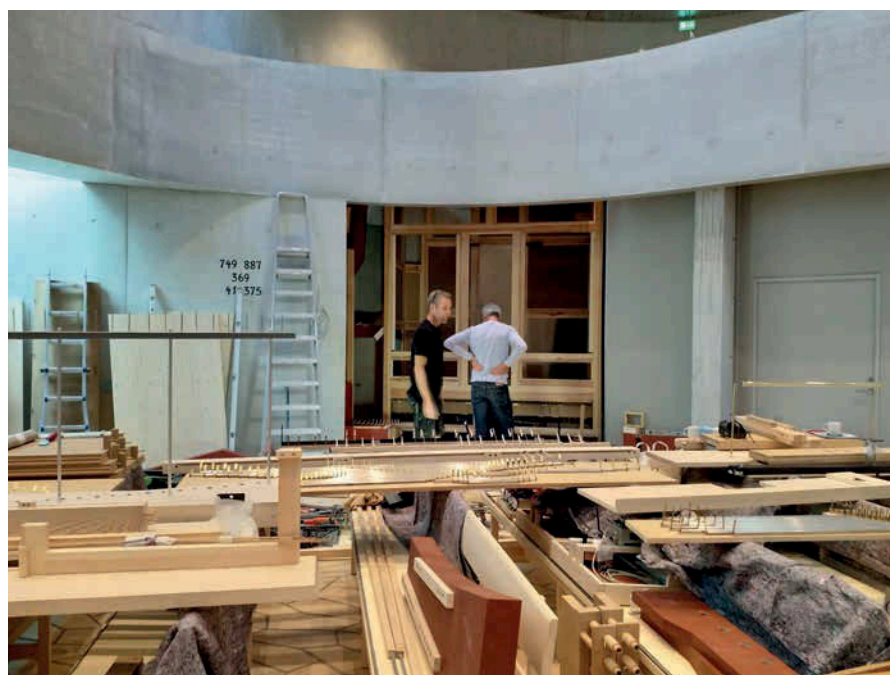
the town's university. Trekroner Church is a stunning concrete ellipse with no straight surfaces, designed by architects Rørbeck & Møller. It is a deeply spiritual room but one that proved a challenge for Momme, charged with 'putting a very square organ into a very round space.'

'It has been a compromise with the architects,' continues Momme. They conceived an instrument with no visible casework. The result will be a compromise, with some Plexiglass casing, a back frame in ash and what Momme describes as 'a super-beautiful console facing into the church.' It is a large instrument, with 30 speaking stops across four divisions (including pedal) and space left for more.

Momme invites me to Trekroner the following week to see the instrument taking shape. Joining us is the project consultant, Frederik Magle. The instrument towers from floor level into the curvaceous, glass-fronted balcony. 'The organ is inspired by the golden age tracker instruments of the 19th century but will do far more,' says Magle; 'It has this romantic base, but more mixtures and the possibility to make distinctly baroque registrations.'

Swell division that, for Magle, 'will make a lovely distant echo sound, as the shutters really close.' From the inauguration on Palm Sunday onwards, it is sure to have a magical effect in the generous acoustics of a striking modern church. ■ *frobenius.nu*

Andrew Mellor is a retired organist and choir trainer, and now a freelance journalist and critic based in Copenhagen.



✓ (from top) Digital image of the new organ for the modernist Trekroner Church (below), and its installation on-site



Rising to glory

Stephen Bicknell visits Blenheim Palace, the home of the Dukes of Marlborough and birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill. It houses an organ from the peak of Henry Willis's career. PHOTOS STEPHEN BICKNELL

From the November/December 2005 issue of Choir & Organ; the complete archive is now available for subscribers to our 'digital' and 'print & digital' packages to explore (see page 66)

In the summer of 1786 King George III and Queen Charlotte paid a visit to the fourth Duke of Marlborough and his wife Lady Caroline at Blenheim Palace. 'They stayed from eleven till six,' wrote the Duchess to a friend afterwards. 'It all went off very well ... considering the shortness of the notice.' While exhausted courtiers hid behind doors to gain temporary respite from the travails of escorting the royal party, the Duke and Duchess gave the King and Queen the tour of house and park that is still enjoyed today. 'We were just an hour going over the principal floor, as they stopped and examined everything in every room.' It was during this visit that King George, clearly overwhelmed by the scale and magnificence of Blenheim, was reported to have exclaimed, 'We have nothing to equal this!'

Indeed he did not. Blenheim is a swaggering great building: a giant sprawled across the green grass of the Oxfordshire countryside, far more impressive than any of Britain's royal palaces and a temple to military success and public ostentation. Blenheim is today a UNESCO World Heritage Site; Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle are not.

When Blenheim was built, as a present from Queen Anne to Sir John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough, in gratitude for his triumphs in the War of Spanish Succession (1702-03), the plans were put into the hands of the court architects. Christopher Wren, Anne's Surveyor-General, excused himself on the grounds of old age, perhaps delicately extracting himself from an uncomfortable position between two strongminded women: Queen Anne on one side and the redoubtable Sarah Churchill, the first Duchess, on the other. At the same time, affairs in Wren's department were approaching a period of change and, as the Blenheim project was being discussed, a number of new men were vying for attention. After an internal battle among courtiers, Wren's comptroller or second-in-command was unseated and the job went to John Vanbrugh.

Vanbrugh was a celebrity. He had worked in the wine trade, had been a soldier, then wrote successful comedies until, in 1699, in the words of Jonathan Swift:

Van's genius, without thought or lecture
Is hugely turn'd to architecture.

At first Vanbrugh relied on the expertise and experience of Wren's assistant, Nicholas Hawksmoor. As Blenheim went up, from the laying of the foundation stone in 1705, Vanbrugh produced the ideas, organised the project, and conducted delicate negotiations with



▲ The organ seen down the length of the Long Library

the client and patron; Hawksmoor contributed industry and drawings. It was a true collaboration and while some elements of the building appear to be by one man and some by the other, even the experts cannot agree exactly where the credit lies.

Between them, Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor conceived a gigantic monument. They seized their chance and set off with the Queen's munificence at a wild gallop. By 1710 £200,000 was spent and £30,000 was owing (about £50 million in today's money); the palace was barely

faced with the unfinished palace and the shreds of his career in 1712. Neither he nor his wife, the indomitable Lady Sarah, was about to let the project fizzle out. The Duchess promptly sued 401 people connected with the construction of the building, and carried on as though nothing had happened.

Their legacy is the pinnacle of the English baroque, an exclamation mark in the history of English architecture. It is neither orthodox nor tidy. Parts of it appear to have been frozen in the act of sliding apart, as though there is

It is a cathedral-sized instrument of four manuals and 32ft pedal, with mahogany for interior parts

roofed and the Queen's patience exhausted. She had fallen out with the Marlboroughs. The Duchess irritated the Queen until animosity set in; the Duke was accused of embezzlement and they were stripped of their posts. In 1712 all building at Blenheim was halted at the Queen's command and the Marlboroughs went into what was described as 'a sort of exile'.

The Churchill family had risen to their position and the Dukedom at speed and in colourful circumstances. Glory in war had followed after a period of intense political manoeuvring. One apocryphal story has the athletic John Churchill leaping out of Barbara Villiers's window just as King Charles II was entering by the door; true or not, it has the proper flavour of derring-do. That same John Churchill, now the first Duke, was

a further palace hidden inside the one we see, preparing to rise yet higher – perhaps even a whole series of interlocking structures ready to expand like a telescope to the full height of a Stalinesque skyscraper. It defies analysis and comprehension. Voltaire and Walpole were horrified, complaining of its impracticality but perhaps merely venting the sense of amazement that strikes viewers even now. The bravura of the concept and execution carries the day; perhaps the controversy that surrounded its construction was, paradoxically, a guarantee of its lasting renown.

The problems of maintaining an establishment that would dwarf one or other European monarch's court has not been lost on succeeding generations of Churchills and Spencer-Churchills, and the Palace has had its

▷



▲ The console, and (below) 32ft basses behind the organ

► The Great, Choir and Solo stop jamb

► (opposite page) Father Willis at Blenheim

◀ share of good and bad luck. In the later 19th century the seventh Duke was beset by financial problems as the income from the estate fell. The Duke was forced to sell some jewels and the library. The eighth Duke was obliged to follow suit and offered up works by Rembrandt, Rubens and Titian in sacrifice. The ebbing tide was stemmed by his marriage in 1888 to Lily Hammersley, a rich American widow ('Lots of tin!' quipped a family friend). Blenheim was on the up again, and it is to Lily Marlborough that we owe the existence of the organ.

Commissioned by the eighth Duke and Lady Lily in 1890, the organ by Henry Willis was installed in 1891 in the Long Library, a huge gallery 183 feet (56 metres) long on the west front of the Palace. Originally it stood in the semi-circular window bay halfway along the room, but in 1903 it was moved to its present position at one end. It is a cathedral-sized instrument of four manuals and 32ft pedal, resplendently fitted out with lavish use of mahogany for interior parts and polished tin for the front pipes. The console is comprehensively decorated with marquetry work in precious woods and ivory. Father Willis may have built one or two bigger organs than this, but he built none more splendid. Over the console is the following inscription:

In Memory of happy days
And as a tribute to this glorious home
We leave thy voice to speak within these walls
In years to come when ours are still
LM 1891 MM

A framed memento next to the organ gives details of the celebratory party at which the organ was first used. Alongside a description of the organ in the fastidious handwriting of Henry Snelgrove, Willis's secretary, are the signatures of those who were there, including Sir Arthur Sullivan, the famously tuneless bass Harry Plunkett Greene and family guests. Sir Frederick Bridge,

organist of Westminster Abbey and Gresham Professor of Music, presided at the organ. Bridge, according to the widespread custom of the day would have received a handsome fee from the Duke and a substantial commission from Willis!

The organ retains its Vincent Willis 1887 patent pneumatic action. It is a fine surviving example of the Willis partnership at its best. Made before Vincent resigned in 1895, it still has some of the brilliance that made the instruments of the 1870s so remarkable, though here the dome over the organ and the relatively soft furnishings of the Long Library do much to take the edge off the tone and reduce the weight overall. If there is a tendency for *mezzo forte* combinations to sound thin in these circumstances, accentuated by Willis's attenuated chorus pipe scales, then majesty and impact returns, as one would expect, with the high-pressure reeds. This is an instrument that works best flitting between delicate orchestral imitation and shattering *fortissimo*. After all, we are not in church.

In 1930 Henry Willis III changed the pitch of the organ, and in 1931 this was followed by the addition of a Welte player mechanism operated from a detached cabinet via electro-pneumatic relays. The ninth Duke then delighted in playing the organ to friends, sitting at the console while the roll-player did the actual work. On one famous occasion he announced his impromptu concert but tripped on a carpet on his way to climb on to the bench. The organ started without him.

The photograph of Father Willis at the console of the Blenheim organ shows the great man at the age of 70. What was on his mind? His rise to glory had been as

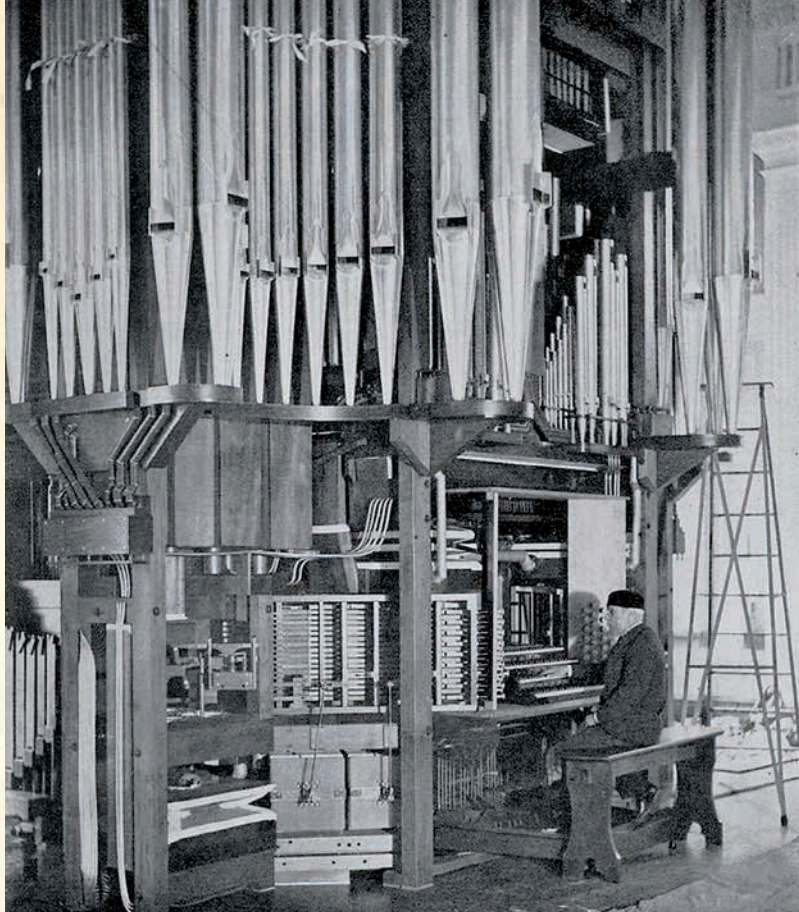


spectacular and hard fought as that of the Churchills. He had triumphed in the end; he had built the finest new organs in Britain and had won several cathedral commissions from Hill, including St Paul's. Now he was favoured by Dr Bridge at the Abbey and by the greatest Duke in the land. Willis enjoyed his success; he owned a large yacht and sometimes sailed in the same waters as the Prince of Wales at Cowes. Whatever next? Though there may have been storms ahead, this was surely a moment of considerable pride and achievement. ■

As an organ builder Stephen Bicknell worked for N.P. Mander and J.W. Walker before turning to freelance work as a designer and consultant. He wrote regularly for Choir & Organ until his death in 2007.

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GREAT		Mixture [17.19.22]	III	PEDALE [sic]	
Double Diapason	16	Contra Hautboy	16	Contra Violone [metal]	32
Open Diapason	8	Cornopean	8	Open Diapason [wood]	16
Open Diapason	8	Hautboy	8	Violone [ext.]	16
Claribel Flute	8	Vox Humana	8	Bourdon	16
Quint	6	Clarion	4	Octave [ext.]	8
Principal	4	<i>Tremulant</i> [low pressure]		Violoncello [ext.]	8
Flute [harmonic]	4			Flute Bass [ext.]	8
Quinte Octaviane	3	CHOIR (unenclosed)		Mixture [17.19.22]	III
Super Octave	2	Gamba	8	Ophicleide	16
Piccolo	2	Dulciana	8	Clarion [ext.]	8
Mixture [17.19.22]	III	Hohl Flöte	8		
Trombone	16	Flûte harmonique	4	<i>Manuals C-a3 (58 notes); Pedals C-f1 (30 notes)</i>	
Tromba	8	Piccolo	2	<i>Lever swell pedals [now converted to balanced operation].</i>	
Clarion	4	Cor Anglais	16	<i>4 unmarked gilded brass pistons each to Gt, Sw and Solo giving fixed combinations; 4 composition pedals to Pedale. Stop knob 'Pistons to Composition Pedals' [now missing]. 2 reverser pistons: Swell to Great and Great to Pedale.</i>	
		Cor Anglais	8	<i>2 pedals operating 'piano' and 'forte' pistons of Swell.</i>	
		Corno di Bassetto	8		
SWELL		SOLO (unenclosed)			
Contra Gamba	16	Claribel Flute	8		
Geigen Principal	8	Gamba	8		
Lieblich Gedact	8	Wald Flute	4		
Salicional	8	Tuba	8		
Vox Angelica	8	[enclosed]			
[from c; draws Salicional also]		Clarinet	8		
Gemshorn	4	Orchestral Oboe	8		
Lieblich Flöte	4				
Flageolet	2				

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David Hill answers your questions about all matters relating to choirs and their conductors

Should tenors and basses sit at the back of the choir?

The traditional format of seating voices in a choir, particularly if it's larger than a chamber choir (up to 40), has favoured sopranos and altos in the first rows and tenors and basses behind them. The main reason for this has been, presumably, that tenors and basses are generally taller than sopranos and altos, while acknowledging

this is not always the case. In venues – often churches – where there is little or no staging, the choice of layout is limited. However, it is possible to think having tenors and basses further back has often resulted in their feeling and reacting in a way which might be described as 'disengaged'. The most common consequence is a tendency to sing behind the rest of the choir and, generally, not keeping up with the pace of rehearsals. I would suggest in larger choirs, depending on the amount of divisi, experimenting in blocks of sound in varied formations.

Single Choir : S1 S2 T1 T2 B1 B2 A1 A2
Double Choir : S A T B B T A S

Placing the bass sound in the middle of the group allows it to be more present, vocally. There are many more permutations possible and, whatever the decision, there will always be some measure of compromise. If you have the luxury of a large and wide space, experiment with voice groups, tenors and basses forward and to the side, sopranos and altos more centrally placed.

A S S A
T B B T

The Conductor asks us to work on our notes between rehearsals. How best can I go about this?

Conductors can be notoriously demanding of their singers, just as personal trainers might be to those wishing to play sport to a decent level. I would suggest this analogy is reasonable as the ability to do well in sport is aligned to how fit any of us is for the task. Knowing the notes and rhythms has to be the equivalent requirement for singers. Whether a race or a performance is involved, only then can the task begin. The analogy can continue in that we have different levels of fitness as we do of musical knowledge. If you don't have access to a piano, then fear not. There are many possible solutions in our hi-tech existence.

Here are some ideas:

- ▶ A short-compass keyboard can be purchased very inexpensively. If you don't know which note is which, go online and all the information you need is there. Spend 20 minutes placing stickers onto the notes and you're off!
- ▶ Download a keyboard app to provide a similar service.
- ▶ There are audio libraries with each individual part available to download and learn alongside. Where that's not available, maybe a member of each section in the choir or the musical director can be asked to record what is required. This system helps notation but advances, even more, the rhythmical solutions to any challenges.
- ▶ The most fun is finding time to meet outside of normal rehearsal times with members of your section and teach each other – then eat and drink together! ■

David Hill is musical director of The Bach Choir and Leeds Philharmonic Society, principal conductor of Yale Schola Cantorum, and associate guest conductor of Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

◀ Placing the bass and tenor sections in the centre of the choir may lead to better engagement



COURTESY ST ALBANS BACH CHOIR

Do you have any questions relating to choral direction and singing? Send them to David Hill via the editor: maggie.hamilton@markallengroup.com



Pierre Dubois retraces the footsteps of the 'first organist in the world' in Bourbon-l'Archambault, France.

PHOTOS COURTESY PIERRE DUBOIS

The 'Bourbonnais' region in the centre of France owes its name to the town of Bourbon-l'Archambault, which was the cradle of the Bourbon dynasty back in the 10th century. In 1790, after the French revolution, the Duchy of Bourbon was replaced by the county of Allier, the principal town of which is Moulins-sur-Allier. The small town of Bourbon-l'Archambault is built around the impressive ruins of its mighty medieval castle with its three surviving towers. The local church, Saint-Georges, is a small but very interesting romanesque

building from the second half of the 12th century, and enlarged in the 15th and 19th centuries. Originally built as a chapel, it became the parish church in 1732.

Bourbon-l'Archambault has long been known for its thermal waters, beneficial to numerous people seeking a cure for rheumatism. Still functioning today, the spa was once visited by members of the aristocracy including the princess of Conti, Madame de Sévigné, Madame de Montespan and the prince Maurice de Talleyrand, after both of whom one of the town's hotels is

named. At the beginning of the 20th century, it was also frequented by the composer, pianist and organist Camille Saint-Saëns, who stayed at the beautiful Hôtel du Parc.

Considered by Franz Liszt as the 'first organist in the world', Saint-Saëns became organist of Saint-Merry in 1853, then succeeded Lefébure-Wély as organist of La Madeleine in Paris in 1857; he was later appointed honorary organist of Saint-Séverin in 1897. He is reported to have been an outstanding improviser and, besides his famous Symphony no.3 with organ, his solo organ pieces (*Préludes et fugues, Fantaisies, 7 Improvisations*, etc.) are works of high quality which deserve to be better-known and played more often. When in Bourbon-l'Archambault to take the waters, Saint-Saëns would play the organ in the local church for Sunday services: it is somewhat intriguing to imagine this great artist and virtuoso playing for Mass on the small organ at Saint-Georges.

The Belgian-born builder Charles Anneessens installed the organ in 1892 in a small loft over the west door. Anneessens must have enjoyed a good reputation at the time: in the 1880s he built a large number of organs in France (no fewer than 63 from 1883) and England. In 1902 he would build his largest instrument for the diocese of Clermont-Ferrand, in Auvergne, about 70 miles south of Bourbon l'Archambault – a three-manual organ boasting 73 stops, with electro-pneumatic action, which is still awaiting a long-overdue restoration.

▼ Bourbon-l'Archambault, known for its thermal waters, proved therapeutic for Camille Saint-Saëns





▲ Saint-Saëns played the Anneessens organ for Sunday services at Saint-Georges (left), and stayed at the Hôtel du Parc (right)

Listed and protected as a *Monument historique*, the Bourbon-l'Archambault organ is quite different, however: it has only 16 stops in all, on two manuals and pedals (eight on the Grand Orgue, six on the Récit Expressif, and two on the Pedals, with a coupler and *tirasse*), with a separate console facing the nave and all-mechanical action. To say it is refined and elegant would be an exaggeration. The Trumpet on the Grand Orgue is much too big in relation to the size of the instrument and was probably designed to produce a grand effect; but it hardly blends well with the rest of the instrument. The organ is nonetheless sturdily built and, despite its limited disposition, it can do justice to quite a few pieces of the romantic repertoire. Saint-Saëns complained at the time that it was horrendously out of tune, and I'm not sure things have changed much to this date; but it was overhauled a few years ago and now works reasonably well.

The Allier is a rural county, with only three medium-sized towns (Moulins, Montluçon and Vichy), so its organ patrimony is not very rich, with only 30-odd instruments, most of them – as in Bourbon-l'Archambault – small 19th-century affairs with one or two manuals. The major exceptions are the François-Henri Clicquot organ of Souvigny (III/27, 1783) and the Merklin organ of the cathedral of Moulins (III/42, 1880; it was inaugurated by Alexandre Guilmant), both unaltered and

used for performance classes organised by the Cambridge Academy of Organ Studies between 2014 and 2018. A small Cavaillé-Coll organ in the church of Saint-Pourçain was put into storage a few years ago during repairs in the church and has not yet resurfaced. More recently, Bernard Aubertin installed a large three-manual German-style organ in Vichy (III/46, 1991).

Saint-Saëns wrote that the waters of Bourbon had restored his fingers, if not his legs

It is not known whether Saint-Saëns played any other instruments in the region during his visits to Bourbon-l'Archambault, but it is unlikely, as he was then an ageing man with rheumatism and might have found it tiring to travel around. He evidently enjoyed the quietness of the town, according to letters he wrote to composer-friends such as Philippe Bellenot, Gabriel Fauré and Eugène Gigout in 1917 and 1918, some of which are now preserved at the *Bibliothèque nationale* (and accessible on line via Gallica). To Bellenot (director of music at Saint-Sulpice) he wrote that his health was excellent apart from his legs, but added with humour that it was some solace to be surrounded by people with even worse legs than his! Elsewhere, he wrote that the waters of Bourbon had restored his fingers, if not his legs.

Demoralised by the first world war, Saint-Saëns found it impossible to write music, and spent much time replying to the numerous letters he received, as well as learning by heart La Fontaine's *Fables* and teaching himself how to recite them. In another letter, he told Bellenot that he found the place 'ravishing' and that the weather was fine, but that he didn't want to be

disturbed and only wished to be left alone. He practised the piano in the morning, he explained, and found life so peaceful there that 'people looking for amusement would be well inspired to come to this part of the country.'

No one can argue with that: with its old houses nestling around the medieval castle of the former dukes of Bourbon and its beautiful 19th-century hotels and villas intended for seasonal residents taking the waters, this small town has lost nothing of its grace, quiet charm and quaint atmosphere.

To reach Bourbon-l'Archambault, take the train from Paris Gare de Bercy to Moulins, then travel by road (hired car, taxi or bus). More information and other routes at france-voyage.com.

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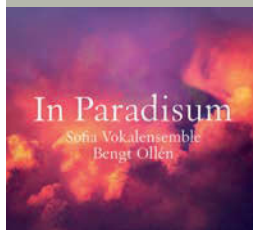
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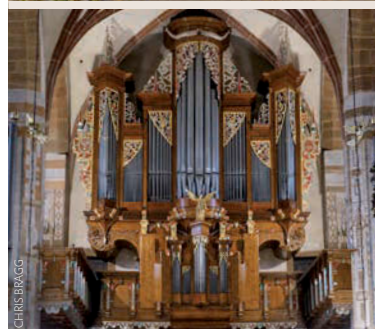
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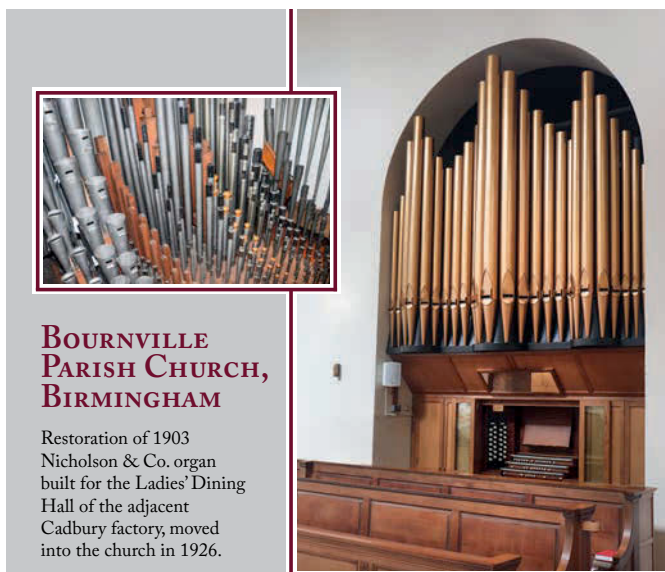
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NEW DISCS COMING OUT IN... DECEMBER 2019



MELANIE ROSS

▲ The 2018 cohort of Yale Schola Cantorum performs in Madrid, conducted by David Hill

As many a culturally diverse country, India has had its share of tensions between adherents of its different religions. In her new work, *This love between us*, Indian-American composer Reena Esmail finds hope by drawing on the differing approaches to unity of India's seven major religious traditions. Each approach forms the foundation for one of the seven movements, with the words combining original languages and English translation.

The texts come either from canonical

religious writings or from poems written through the lens of religion, while the music joins Indian and western classical styles in another layer of unity. Speaking of the pain of being unable to return to India due to visa restrictions, a 'heartbreak' which occurred the day before this commission, Esmail says, 'If it is impossible to be in both places at once, or at all, I have strived every day since then to create this hybrid, united world in my music.' On **New England Choirworks** [Hyperion CDA 68314], Yale Schola Cantorum has recorded the work

under the direction of David Hill, alongside Roderick Williams's *A New England Symphony* and Hill's personal tribute to organist John Scott, *God be in my head*, among other shorter works.

Yale Schola Cantorum also features on another Hyperion release, **Schütz: The Christmas Story & other works** [Hyperion CDA 68315]. And from Latvia, after several years of research alongside musicologist Agnese Paunia, the Latvian Radio Choir's chief conductor, Sigvards Klāva, has uncovered the complete choral music of Latvian composer Jānis Zālīts (1884-1943), which is now published as a new sheet music edition. On **Jānis Zālīts: Complete Choral Songs** [Skani LMIC 077], the Latvian Radio Choir performs the world premiere recording of all 44 of his works for choir.

Celebrating the prayer of one of the most significant women in the Christian religion, invocations of the Magnificat come from Jean-Baptiste Robin, playing **Dandrieu vol.1: Magnificats** [Château de Versailles Spectacles CVS 023] on the Great Organ in the Royal Chapel of Versailles. The recording recreates pieces for Christmas from the height of the French baroque. And in southern Germany, the sub-organist of Westminster Abbey, Peter Holder, records his first solo disc, **Bach is the Father, We are the Children** [Fugue State Films FSRCD 015], with works by the Bach family, Ernst, Rinck and Mozart on the 1797 Holzhey organ in Neresheim Abbey. ■

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Choir of Worcester College,
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Adriana Gonzalez (s), Julien Behr (t),
Andreas Wolf (b-bar), Le Concert
Spirituel/Niquet
Alpha Classics ALPHA 564

Christmas Crackers
The Lay Clerks of Guildford Cathedral
Herald HAVPCD 411

Jānis Zālīts: Complete Choral Songs
Latvian Radio Choir/Kļava
Skani LMIC 077

Mother of God – Choral Music to the Virgin Mary
Khoros
Prima Facie PFCD 117

New England Choirworks
Yale Schola Cantorum/Hill
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Noëls baroques à Versailles
Les Pages du CMBV/Jarry
Château de Versailles Spectacles
CVS 025

Schütz: The Christmas Story & other works
Yale Schola Cantorum/Hill
Hyperion CDA 68315

Roderick Elms: A Windy Christmas
Various/Tovey
Herald HAVPCD 410

ORGAN CDS

Bach is the Father, We are the Children
Peter Holder, Holzhey organ,
Neresheim Abbey, Germany
Fugue State Films FSRCD 015

Dandrieu vol.1: Magnificats
John-Baptiste Robin, Royal
Chapel of Versailles
Château de Versailles Spectacles
CVS 023

Mahler: Orchestral Songs – The Organ Transcriptions
David Briggs, Eule organ,
Konstantin-Basilika, Germany;
David John Pike (bar)
Analekta AN 29180



REVIEWS

Rating: ★★★★★ Highly recommended ★★★★★ Very good ★★★★★ Good ★★★★★ Average ★ Poor



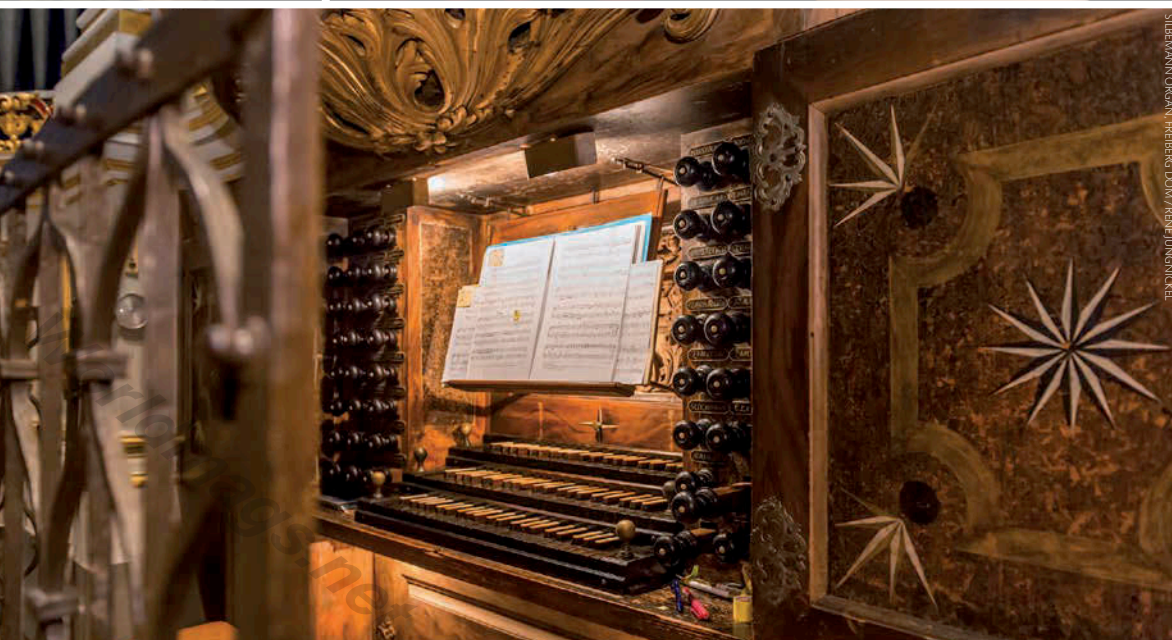
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KEYBOARD CDS

Delphin and Nicolaus Adam Strungk, Peter Mohrhardt: Complete Organ Music

Manuel Tomadin, St Stephen, Tangermünde, Germany, and Jacobikerk, Uithuizen, Netherlands

Brilliant Classics 95758 (2CDs) [76:39; 79:58]

★★★



Three rather overlooked 17th-century composers feature

here, representing the experimental shift from renaissance to baroque writing from father Delphin Strungk (b.1600) to son Nicolaus Adam (d.1700) via Peter Mohrhardt (who may have been a pupil of Strungk). The later works are represented on Uithuizen's Arp Schnitger organ (c.1700) with its better-suited Vallotti temperament. However, this instrument is recorded very close and doesn't provide as rich an experience as that afforded by Tangermünde's Hans Scherer organ of 1624, used for the music of Delphin. Here, Manuel Tomadin's performances feel better paced, and I enjoyed an hour of feeling transported back 400 years. Tomadin's comprehensive notes complete this interesting retrospective of 17th-century German organ writing.

RUPERT GOUGH

Orgelmusik aus der Johanneskirche, Saalfeld

Andreas Marquardt
Querstand VKJK 1809 [66:44]

★★★★



The instrument in the spotlight here is the Wilhelm Sauer organ of

1894 in a programme incorporating J.S. Bach's Partita 'Christ, der du bist der helle Tag', Mozart's Fantasia in F minor, the Six Studies in Canonic Form, op.56 of Schumann, and Reger's Fantasia & Fugue in D minor. Sadly, the rather basic sleeve notes do not reveal the origin of the Mozart arrangement. Andreas Marquardt delivers a fine recital successfully illustrating that, despite its romantic pedigree, Sauer's instrument handles 200 years of organ repertoire with conviction. Unsurprisingly, it is in the Reger where this instrument really comes alive and the dynamic range is used to terrific effect.

RUPERT GOUGH

Prières pour Notre Dame – Dupré, Boulanger, Demessieux, Poulenc

Colin Walsh, Cavaillé-Coll organ, St Ouen, Rouen; Senior Girls of Romsey Abbey Choir / George Richford (dir)
Regent REGCD 538 [68:00]

★★★★★



This recording, made in 2018, realises a personal ambition of

George Richford, Romsey Abbey's then director of music, to bring together the talents of his senior girls' choir, organist Colin Walsh, and the Cavaillé-Coll Grand Organ of St Ouen, Rouen. The Abbey and Rouen Cathedral share Benedictine monastic links – the Romsey girls are well-versed in plainsong, here providing the chants *alternatim*, on which Marcel Dupré's *15 Versets pour les Vêpres du Commun des fêtes de la Sainte-Vierge* are based. They continue with Lili Boulanger's *Pie Jesu* and Poulenc's *Litanies à la Vierge*

Noire, while Walsh also contributes two items from Jeanne Demessieux's op.8 collection of *Choral Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes*. In collective music-making of the highest quality, the programme's contrasts between serene calm and passionate drama are vividly captured in Rouen's pellucid acoustics. There is no hint that the performers were battling against a series of bureaucratic and logistical *cauchemars*, including noisy street celebrations after France's football World Cup win, a constantly mobile flock of resident pigeons inside the Cathedral, and the effects of a ten-year high of heat and humidity in the city. Nor, in Walsh's immaculate playing and choice of registrations, is there the slightest evidence that the organ is, in Richford's words, 'in a state of disrepair needing round-the-clock medical attention' – one has to ask why Cavaillé-Coll's acknowledged masterpiece, an organ of world importance, is evidently in such poor mechanical order; notwithstanding, tuner Denis Lacorre is credited for his heroic efforts in keeping this show on the road. All-in-all, this is a highly satisfying recording of a compelling programme of music – a credit to all concerned.

GRAEME KAY

Invocations – Organ Music by Huw Morgan

David Pipe, Bridlington Priory
Meridian CDE 84653 [70:18]

★★★★★



It is good to see a disc devoted to the organ music of Welsh composer Huw Morgan championed by David Pipe. There is great variety

in the pieces presented, all illustrating the kind of ingenuity of organ writing that only comes from an organist-composer. I cannot sum this up better than the words of Michael Bonaventure in the detailed sleeve notes: 'Adventurous, engaging and imaginative, at times provocative, yet always accessible and eminently practical.' Pipe creates some extraordinary effects from the fine Bridlington Priory organ, brilliantly drawing all the poetry and drama out of Morgan's excellent compositions.

RUPERT GOUGH

C.P.E. Bach: The Solo Keyboard Music vol.38: The Earliest Works

Miklós Spányi, harpsichord by Gebrüder Ammer (1948)
BIS -2337 [78:35]

★★★★



The choice of a 71-year-old instrument is justified by Miklós

Spányi, who argues that harpsichords in historical styles were being built by Ammer a long time before the period-instrument movement came to public notice. Rescued from being scrapped, this particular two-manual harpsichord was built in 18th-century Thuringian style, with a specification of 16-8-8-4, restored, re-quilled and re-strung by Spányi himself. Included in the programme are Marches, Polonaises, Minuets, Suites, Variations and a Sonata, together with pieces from the Anna Magdalena Bach *Clavierbüchlein* that were probably composed by C.P.E. – interesting curios played at slightly plodding tempi with colourful registration.

DAVID PONSFORD

Die Domorgeln von Friedrich Ladegast

Michael Schönheit, 1855
Ladegast organ, Merseburg
Dom; Britta Schwarz (a),
Andreas Scheibner (bar),
Andreas Hartmann (vn)
Querstand VKJK 1810 [72:54]
★★★★

Jan Ernst, 1871 Ladegast organ,
Schwerin Dom; Xaver Schult
(org), Matthias Vieweg (b),
Dietrich Hempel (vn), The
Goethles wind ensemble,
Verena Lorenz (hp)
Querstand 1811 [61:41]
★★★★



Friedrich Ladegast was one of the greatest organ builders of the 19th century and this pair of CDs featuring his two great cathedral organs, at Schwerin and Merseburg, are triumphant confirmations of this status. Ladegast's organs remained staunchly conservative: mechanical throughout and wedded to the tonal ideas he inherited from his central German predecessors, with a broadening of the 8ft colour palette, modest enclosures and the introduction of various exotic colours, most especially the free reeds.

These discs are brilliantly conceived, conveying the variety of contexts in which the organ would originally have been heard by reconstructing their opening recitals. In both instances, these featured a myriad of soloists, vocalists, violinists, a harpist and even a wind ensemble. The Schwerin disc is especially attractive, cathedral cantor Jan Ernst performing with a palpable

awareness of the organ's vast possibilities. Remarkably, his 1871 predecessor had been a Yorkshireman, George Hepworth, who had brought Ladegast to Schwerin after encountering his organ in the Nicolaikirche in Leipzig. From Hepworth's programme I especially enjoyed Mendelssohn's aria 'Gott, sei mir gnädig' (*St Paul*), sung with great poetry by Matthias Vieweg and with the oboe and bassoon obbligatos singing out mournfully on their free reed equivalents. Bach's Prelude & Fugue in A minor is performed using registration and articulation indications from an edition by Ernst Naumann, dating from 1900; Schubert's *Ave Maria* is heard in an arrangement for harp and organ; and in Hartmann's Funeral March for the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, the organ is joined in dark majesty by a brass ensemble.

The opening of the Merseburg organ in 1855, meanwhile, was a joint effort with the performers including Cathedral organist David Hermann Engel, Alexander Winterberger and Franz Liszt. Engel's own rugged Fantasia & Fugue in G minor opened the proceedings, with the heart of the programme occupied by Bach (including the aria 'Erbarme dich' from the *Matthäuspasion*) and Liszt, the great 'Ad Nos' Fantasia & Fugue, performed by Winterberger, because the work intended for the concert – the Prelude & Fugue on BACH – was not yet complete. Remarkably, Michael Schönheit's performance here, though hardly rushed at 31'34", is a full five minutes quicker than his previous recording on the same instrument, for MDG. Unfortunately, an otherwise

Il Cembalo Transalpino from the Fitzwilliam Collection

Sophie Yates, Boni harpsichord, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Chandos CHAN 0819 [65:16]
★★★★



A rare early 17th-century Italian harpsichord in the Fitzwilliam Museum provides Sophie Yates with the perfect instrument for this disc of music associated with the collection of Viscount Fitzwilliam. This instrument originally had three sets of 8ft strings, probably in the 18th century reduced to two, and now as restored has three sets of jacks, the front and back row plucking the same set of strings at different places, the middle row the second set of strings. This allows for quite a varied range of tone colour, which Yates uses to great effect. Her playing is a delight, demonstrating great

'A lovely recording'

understanding of both music and instrument. Works from the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book* occupy the larger part of the programme, with the Passamezzo Pavan and Galliard by Peter Philips particularly impressive. Other works from the collection include the *Toccata settima* of Frescobaldi, which receives one of the finest performances I have heard, and three sonatas from an Amsterdam collection of 1705 bought by Fitzwilliam in 1771. The meantone tuning enhances all of this repertoire, and enables it to be heard as it would have been when the harpsichord was first made. A lovely recording, highly recommended.

DOUGLAS HOLLICK

▼ Sophie Yates's playing is 'a delight'



COURTESY SOPHIE YATES

Masaaki Suzuki plays Bach Organ Works, vol. 3

Masaaki Suzuki, Silbermann organ, Freiberg Cathedral

BIS-2421 [79:07]

★★★★★



This is the third volume in a very well received series of recordings from Masaaki Suzuki who has, of course, developed a terrific reputation as a conductor for his interpretations of Bach cantatas. I suspect the relatively harsh temperament of the Freiberg organ has influenced the choice of repertoire here, with all the significant works in C major or minor (including the Passacaglia & Fugue) alongside other chorale-based pieces in closely related

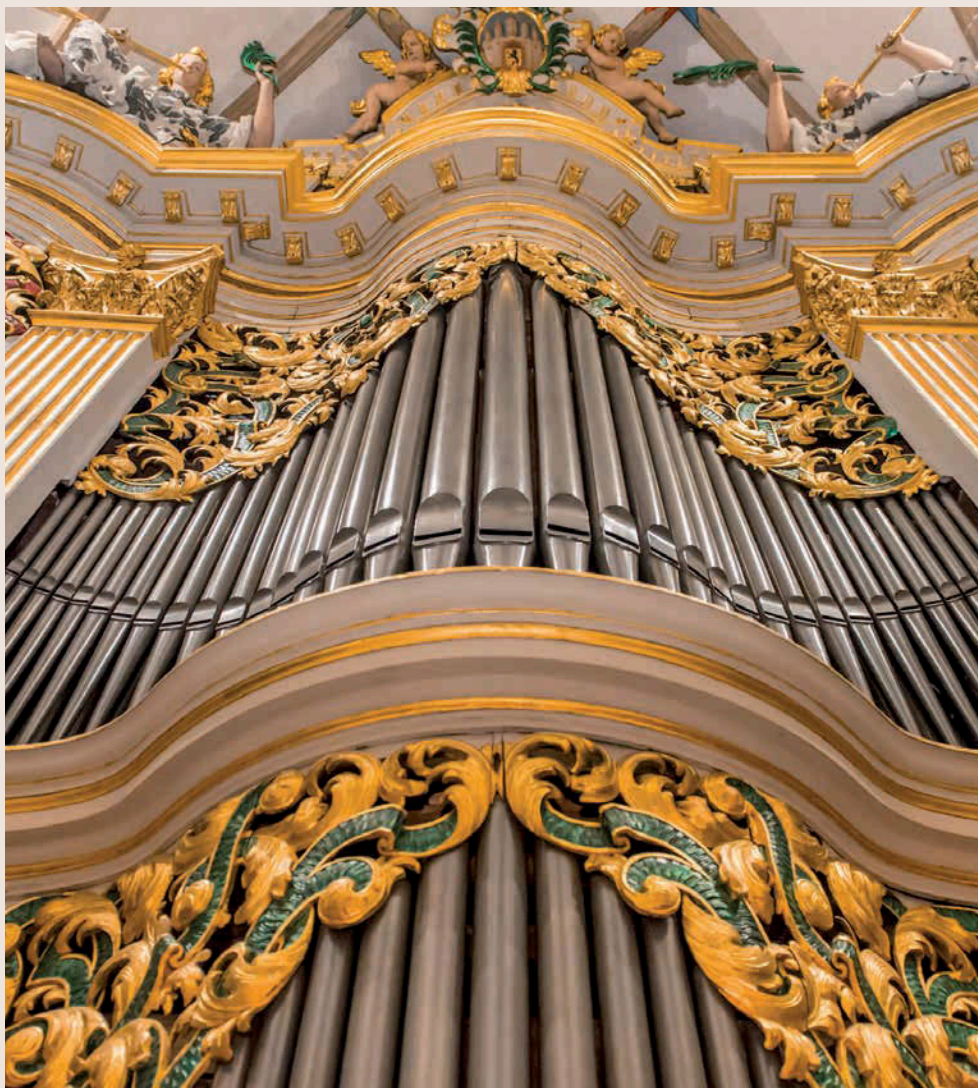
keys. Some of the registrations are unorthodox; however, the overall combination of detail and colour from the Silbermann organ is divine, and the pitch (well over a semitone sharp) makes for an eerie quality at times. Suzuki's performances are at times quite measured, even understated,

'Magisterial sense of architecture'

although that makes the moments when flair shines through all the more exciting. Overall it is the magisterial sense of the architecture of the large-scale works that is particularly to be admired.

RUPERT GOUGH

▼ 'The combination of detail and colour from the Silbermann organ is divine'



RENE JUNGWICKEL

◀ expressive interpretation becomes rather ragged towards the end.

Both organs sound superb and these discs are highly recommended for anyone curious about the Ladegast style and its associated musicians.

CHRIS BRAGG

CHORAL CDS

Consolatio: Choral music by Ko Matsushita, Reger and Mahler

Kammerchor Saarbrücken, Ivette Kiefer (pno) / Georg Grün (dir)

Carus 83.505 [55:15]

★★★★★



This recording brings together seven brief settings of Latin

motets by the Japanese composer Ko Matsushita (b.1962) – he is a practising Roman Catholic – together with three secular pieces by Reger and an arrangement of the Adagietto from Mahler's Fifth Symphony set to Eichendorff's *Im Abendrot*. Matsushita's motets are skilfully and effectively written for single or double choir. He manages to obtain a great deal from his tonal harmony, which ranges from quite simple homophony to a style which is more complex and sometimes embraces tone clusters. The Kammerchor Saarbrücken and founder Georg Grün offer first-rate accounts of Matsushita's works, which hopefully will bring his music to a wider audience of listeners and performers. They acquit themselves equally well in the attractive Reger pieces, his op.6, as they do in Clytus Gottwald's 16-voice Mahler arrangement – though why anyone should

want to do such a thing to one of Mahler's most celebrated orchestral movements is a puzzle to this reviewer. Admittedly, Grün's way with it is seductive.

PHILIP REED

Das neugeborne Kindelein – Christmas Cantatas by Buxtehude, Telemann, J.S. Bach

La Petite Bande / Sigiswald Kuijken (dir)

Accent ACC 24348 [52:46]

★★★★★



This CD is a brilliant demonstration of the supremacy of

German baroque seasonal music, with two works each from Buxtehude and Telemann (the latter's lively *Missa sopra 'Ein Kindelein so löblich'* is a rarity) arranged around an energetic chamber performance of J.S. Bach's cantata *Ich freue mich in dir*, BWV 133. Four solo voices bring elegant phrasing to ensembles, balanced with single strings spinning glorious counterpoint in precious filaments of sound. Recorded with warmth and clarity, the programme is brought to a genial conclusion with Buxtehude's charming *In dulci jubilo*, as dancing voices and trilling violins evoke the beating of angel wings.

REBECCA TAVENER

Melancholy and Mirth

Opus 8

Opus 001 [46:33]

★★★★★



This is the debut disc from the Toronto-based Opus 8, an ensemble of eight singers whose repertoire, on the evidence of this lovely CD, is broad – from

14th-century chansons to Stockhausen and beyond. They also clearly take huge pleasure in what they do – try their rendition of Keith Roberts's arrangement of the traditional *Dashing away with the Smoothing Iron* which brings the disc to a heart-warming conclusion. But they can do serious too: particularly enjoyable were the precision of Stockhausen's *Die Nachtigall* and the beautifully phrased account of Weelkes's *Thule, The Period of Cosmography*. So, an auspicious first recording. It's a real shame they didn't set down more material, as the CD is really very short.

PHILIP REED

Perspectives on Schubert: The Complete Choral Works for Male Voices by Schubert, vol.6: Arrangements and Works inspired by Schubert

Camerata Musica Limburg / Jan Schumacher (dir)

Genuin GEN 19672 [67:13]

★★★★★



This is a genuinely unusual idea: to offer over an hour's music

which is either obviously Schubert in arrangement or – and this is where it gets more fascinating still – music inspired by Schubert's vocal music. To take an extreme example of the latter: Swedish composer Mårten Jansson's response to *Erlikönig* is far removed from Schubert's dramatic setting of Goethe's poem, yet it preserves distinct musical motifs for each of the characters just as Schubert does, while creating an ominous atmosphere as the father rides through the forest. Jansson's piece is a commission from Camerata Musica

Limburg, and there are several other specially created works for them on this CD, as well as some more obviously traditional arrangements by figures such as Granville Bantock (sung in English, of course) and Liszt. The disc ends with an account of *An die Musik*, sung in unison by Camerata Music Limburg with a jazz improvisation by Walter L. Born. Jan Schumacher and his forces are, on the evidence of this disc, devoted to their composer and his wider influence.

PHILIP REED

Kile Smith: The Arc in the Sky

The Crossing / Donald Nally (dir)

Navona Records NV6240 [65:00]

★★★★★



Described as a 'pilgrimage for unaccompanied chorus', *The Arc in*

the Sky uses texts by Robert Lax (1915-2000), a Catholic convert from Judaism, who wrote for, among others, *The New Yorker*. According to composer Kile Smith, for Lax jazz was 'a metaphor for life, a communal improvisation with others and with God'. Certainly, Smith's exuberant opening movement fully exploits the message of Lax's poem. Indeed, throughout this 65-minute work, Smith reveals himself able to adopt different styles with ease and fluency, in material that holds one's attention. Donald Nally and The Crossing commissioned *The Arc in the Sky* and are obviously entirely inside Kile Smith's music. Their well-blended tone, with nothing ever forced, let alone ugly, is beautifully captured.

PHILIP REED

American Reflections (Argento, Pond, Copland, Lauridsen, Runestad, Whitacre, Traditional)

St Charles Singers / Jeffrey Hunt (dir)

MSR Classics MS1660 [63:33]

★★★★★



This is an exceptionally well-performed, attractively

programmed disc of American choral music, which, as Jeffrey Hunt explains in his liner notes, offers reflections on four themes: water, love, oppression and hope. Starting with James Erb's arrangement of that classic *Shenandoah*, we are led through Argento's *Walden Pond*, Whitacre's *Water Night*, to Lauridsen's *Dirait-on* and so on. With a well-balanced and beautifully blended choral sound, the St Charles Singers are totally committed to what they perform. Of particular interest is Argento's *Walden Pond*, a major piece of American choral music and here receiving an authoritative reading from Jeffreys – shame the accompanying three cellists and harpist remain anonymous.

PHILIP REED

Jón Leifs: Edda II – The Lives of the Gods

Hanna Dóra Sturludóttir (m-s), Elmar Gilbertsson (t), Kristinn Sigmundsson (b), Schola Cantorum, Iceland Symphony Orchestra / Hermann Bäumer (dir)

BIS 2420 (SACD) [65:10]

★★★



This is 'sacred music' that really does need the scare quotes. Jón

Leifs – originally Þorleifsson – began his *Edda* sequence in 1932 with 'The Creation of the

EARLY MUSIC



Rebecca Tavener rounds up the latest releases

The world of historically informed performance is still not entirely free from examples of that unreleased, restricted vocal quality that was the mark of the earliest days of the early music revival. Even when the results are as beautiful as they appear in a new release from La Petite Bande directed by Sigiswald Kuijken, the singing teacher's ear can detect in the highest voices a hint that they might be even more beguiling without that touch of technical compromise. Nevertheless, **Heinrich Schütz – Resurrection of Christ** [Accent ACC 24355], a programme of Easter works (four motets and the *Historia der Auferstehung Jesu Christi*, SWV 50), is gorgeous, with loads of detail from a delicately moulded ensemble, revealing all the composer's craft with a light touch and considerable care, much emotional engagement and spiritual atmosphere. Nine nimble singers are supported by organ, violin, viola da gamba and violone, and Stephan Scherpe as the Evangelist delivers the composite text from the four Gospels gracefully, with exemplary enunciation and total commitment.

Schütz was credited with bringing the Italian style to German musicians (my, how they ran with it) and here are some of the next generation, all born in the 17th century but maturing in the 18th, gathered together in **Spirito Italiano – Italian Style in German Baroque** [Pan Classics PC 10398] by Musica Fiorita, directed by Daniela Dolci. This original programme, joy from end to end, finds three instrumental works by Fasch, Stölzel, and Molter alternating with three choral works. Molter's cantata *In Jesu heilig' und Geliebte* for the third day of Christmas takes centre-stage, and the wonderful oboe and violin obbligato gilding the tenor aria is a glorious stand-out moment. A Kyrie in D major by Hasse is unrepentantly assured in character, and the disc finale, a Te Deum by Niccolò Jommelli, makes one want to jump up and dance, even in the slow and stately

passages. In lively, translucent acoustics it all delivers listening pleasure of the highest order, crowned by exceptionally vivid choral singing (no technical compromises here) as the aptly named Dolci crafts elegant phrasing, uplifting as a good tiramisu: mascarpone and caffeine with an intoxicating vein of marsala wine.

For some cathartic tears, indulge in some rare Passiontide repertoire from Francisco Xavier García Fajer and José Joaquim dos Santos. **Passio Iberica** [Pan Classics PC 10401] features Divino Sospiro directed by Massimo Mazzeo in Spanish and Portuguese works for Holy Week from the latter 18th century. Fajer's *The Seven Last Words of Christ* (sung in Castilian) for a pair of high voices is left agonisingly hanging at the end with the last, devastating statement from unaccompanied soprano. The *Stabat Mater* by Santos features three technically impressive, emotionally sensitive, expert solo voices

Dolci crafts elegant phrasing, uplifting as a good tiramisu

(SSB) working splendidly together and apart, plus a small string band, here providing a spiny-toned depth of expression that enhances the immediacy and almost palpable presence of the recording.

Finally, a trip back to the 16th century for an adventurous recording of Spanish secular songs, mostly in recorded premieres, from the seven singers of Amystis directed by José Duce Chenoll. **Ecos del Parnaso** [Brilliant Classics 95905] is a fascinating, revelatory programme comprising lovely stuff from Diego Ortiz, Joan Brudieu, Rodrigo de Ceballos et al. Voices in various combinations, plus occasional harp, make supreme efforts to impart emotional warmth in acoustics too chilled for this amorous repertoire, but there's no doubting the emotional, scholarly and musical commitment of all concerned in a sequence of marvellous music from a pioneering group.

Rebecca Tavener is a singer and director specialising in early and contemporary music. She is founder-director of Canty, Scotland's only professional medieval music group.

▼ 'Impressive and emotionally sensitive': Divino Sospiro



◀ World' and picked it up again in 1951, the period in between shadowed by the death of his daughter and the writing of several memorial pieces, including an unusual, lullaby-like Requiem. Part three remained unfinished at his death in 1968, so it is perhaps on this middle pillar, recorded here for the first time, that the work's reputation rests. One can't help but feel that these are the Norse gods – Odin and his sons plus Valkyries, norns and warriors – neither playfully brought up-to-date like Neil Gaiman's *American Gods* nor presented full-screen like the recent Marvel franchise, but somehow straining for atavistic effect, like his representation in 'Hekla' of a volcanic eruption. That said, the singing here is

remarkably restrained and the orchestra accompanies with a delicacy Leifs doesn't often invite. SACD sound here tends to emphasise the modesty of the interpretation, rather than drama and grandeur.

BRIAN MORTON

Einojuhani Rautavaara: *Vigilia*

Niall Chorell (t), Tuukka Haapaniemi (b), Helsinki Chamber Choir / Nils Schweckendiek (dir)
BIS 2422 (SACD) [70:34]

★★★★★



The Rachmaninov *All-Night Vigil* is popular in Finland, where Orthodox and western church traditions intriguingly collide, and so Rautavaara's challenge

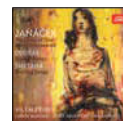
was to compose something radically different, a through-composed service with a strong Byzantine rather than Slavic cast. After two performances at Uspenski Cathedral in 1971 and 1972 of the Vespers and Matins respectively, which included the words of the priest and readers as well as the standard texts used by Rachmaninov, Rautavaara created a concert version that loses nothing of the work's dark force. The quality is captured by the Helsinki Chamber Choir and soloists, who have to negotiate difficult glissandi, microtonal passages and whispers, and also by a superb recording made at Järvenpää, near Sibelius's old home, and the spiritual centre of Finnish music.

BRIAN MORTON

Janáček: *The Diary Of One Who Disappeared*; Dvořák: *Biblical Songs*; Smetana: *Evening Songs*

Libuše Márová (m-s), Vilém Přibyl (t), Members of the Kühn Mixed Chorus (Pavel Kühn, chorus master), Josef Páleníček (pno) / Milan Máša (dir)
Supraphon SU 4269 2 [69:20]

★★★★★



This is inspired programming, not least in showing the evolution of Czech music from the residual traditionalism of Smetana's brief, lovely cycle of *Evening Songs* to the full-blown modernity of Smetana's immaculately structured setting of poems he found serialised in a newspaper; they have since been shown to be by Ozeř Kalda (1871-1921). ▶

J.S. Bach: *Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248*

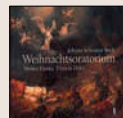
Bachchor Mainz, Bachorchester Mainz / Ralf Otto (dir)
Naxos 8.574001-02 (2CDs) [77:51; 67:26]

★★★★★

J.S. Bach: *Weihnachtsoratorium, BWV 248*

Musica Fiorita / Daniela Dolci (dir)
Pan Classics PC 10393 (2CDs) [76:54; 65:11]

★★★★★



Highlighting the almost infinite possibilities for variation within the 'historically informed' spectrum, these two fine interpretations of Bach's evergreen Christmas narrative are rich with understanding and vivid story-telling. The 37 amateurs of the remarkably flexible Bachchor Mainz follow Ralf Otto's detailed phrasing, matching Bachorchester Mainz's disciplined virtuosity. Otto makes it dance with carefully judged tempi and unwavering momentum, even when a heavy downbeat dominates. Sweet-toned, expressive evangelist Georg Poplutz is totally immersed and responsive to textual nuance.

'Infinite possibilities for variation'

In brighter acoustics, the 11 professional voices of Musica Fiorita are more integrated with their tiny band. Every burnished line contributes to exquisite chamber music-making, with more ornamentation than the Germans, more invention, more drama,



▲ Georg Poplutz is a sweet-toned evangelist

just as much impact, and a spring in the step. Excellent evangelist Hans Jörg Mammel impresses, as do the others soloists on both recordings, the principal difference being a male alto for the Swiss and a contralto in Mainz.

So, the Germans are tender, reflective, lofty and the Swiss more excitable, exalted, involving. Both interpretations honour contemporary views of performance practice (Musica Fiorita is closer to Bach's forces in size) but it is the edgy, sparkling, transcendent joy evoked by Daniela Dolci from her Italian-Swiss forces that is more stirring, probably because they were recorded as part of a ground-breaking liturgical reconstruction with genuine devotional involvement.

REBECCA TAVENER

Christmas selection

Quality seasonal choral releases have been so plentiful this year that **Matthew Power** tackles a second batch promising a very happy Christmas...



The youthful voices of Yale Schola Cantorum, conducted by David Hill, make a pleasant blend and are well balanced with the accompanying baroque instruments on **Schütz: The Christmas Story** [Hyperion CDA 68315]. The work consists of eight tableaux (*intermedia*) for solo voices and/or chorus plus recitatives for tenor evangelist. Six other short works include *Ave Maria*, *Magnificat* and *Hodie Christus natus est*.

Soloists and players perform with stylistic integrity; the recording has dry acoustics and diction lacks some clarity in chorus movements, but that doesn't detract from brilliant composition and fine musicality.

Centre-stage on Stile Antico's **A Spanish Nativity** [Harmonia mundi HMM 902312] is Alonso Lobo's sublime *Missa Beata dei genitrix Maria*, interleaved with motets by Victoria, Guerrero and Morales. There are piquant *villancicos* (Spanish carols) including the joyous *Riu riu chíu* of Mateo Flecha's *El Viejo*. Both sides of the Spanish golden age are portrayed here in stunning music.

Alternating the 'O' Antiphons (in English) with contemporary and renaissance pieces, **Advent Carols from King's College London** [Delphian CDC 34226] was recorded in the cavernous All Hallows, Gospel Oak, with its great Hill organ. Under Joseph Fort's energetic direction the King's voices shine, especially in new works by George Benjamin and Kerensa Briggs. Atmospheric and highly recommended.

Christmas at St George's Windsor [Hyperion CDA 38281], directed by James Vivian with Luke Bond at the organ, is an outstanding disc on several levels: the choir are at the top of their game, the rich repertoire spans Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, and new works are of consistent high quality. Surprising Advent pieces from Finnis and Pärt, new takes on Christmas standards from David Briggs and Richard Madden, and refreshing Epiphany offerings from Alan Bullard and Matthew Martin combine with established repertoire and three Byrd motets for good measure.



The close recording of the male voice line-up of The Gesualdo Six on **Christmas** [Hyperion CDA 38299] reveals the tightness of their ensemble in repertoire ranging from Praetorius to Cheryl Frances-Hoad. Tenor Joseph Wicks's a cappella arrangement of Jonathan Harvey's *The Annunciation* and director Owain Park's vibrant *On the Infancy of our Saviour* complement well-chosen pieces, making for a delightful and informative listening experience – and a thoughtful stocking filler!

The lyrical melodies and comfortable harmonies of Ben Parry's choral writing are as appealing to singers as to listeners. **Ben Parry: Music for Christmas** [Regent REGCD 542], with the Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge, and the Girl Choristers of Ely Cathedral under the direction of Sarah MacDonald, is a useful release of well-known texts in all-new settings. The combined voices are effective advocates for repertoire to broaden the Christmas canon.

Three cycles for upper voices are eloquently presented on **Make we Merry** [Regent REGCD 547] by the well-honed singing of Benenden Chapel Choir, directed by Edward Whiting, and coloured with brass, piano, percussion and cello. David Bednall's *Make we Merry* is less sugary than its title suggests and exhibits variety across its eight movements; sparser modal sounds are heard in Canadian

A delightful and informative listening experience – and stocking filler!

Sarah Quartel's *Snow Angel*; and Bob Chilcott's sparky language in *The Midnight of your Birth* completes this innovative collection.

A Baroque Christmas [Harmonia mundi HMX 2908984.87, 4CDs] is a Christmas present that will entertain and enlighten well into the new year. Previously released recordings from Harmonia mundi comprise J.S. Bach's *Weihnachts-Oratorium* (discs 1 & 2) in a performance that is hard to surpass, with the RIAS Kammerchor and Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, directed by René Jacobs. The lesser-known and remarkable *Pastorale sur la naissance de notre Seigneur* by Charpentier exhibits energy with precision and the sweetest of baroque instrumental accompaniment, performed by Ensemble Correspondances under the baton of Sébastien Dacé. Jacobs conducts *Concerto Vocale* on the fourth disc, featuring works by Corelli, Rosenmüller, Buxtehude and Schütz.

Also received:

A Windy Christmas – fun music for the festive season by Roderick Elms – The Joyful Company of Singers and others [Herald HAVPCD 410]
Tidings of Comfort and Joy – The Cathedral

Choir and Schola of St Philip, Atlanta, Georgia – Dale Adelman (dir) [Gothic G-49323]

◀ Vilém Přibyl and Libuše Márová are magnificent in Janáček's dramatic cycle, which was staged at the Royal Opera House in June 2019 by Muziektheater Transparant. This version has every bit as much presence and sense of action. The small women's group which delivers three songs has a choric function in the other sense, and the village boy/gypsy girl plot is in no way hackneyed or trite. Přibyl in particular inhabits this music rather than merely singing it. A wonderful recording.
BRIAN MORTON

Will Todd: Mass in Blue

Joanna Forbes L'Estrange (s), Alexander L'Estrange (b), Nonsuch Singers, Felix Higginbottom (drums), John Turville (pno) / Tom Bullard (dir)
Convivium Records CR047
[68:00]

★★★★



This is the first recording of the jazz trio version of Will Todd's 2003

Jazz Mass, which is justly popular with choirs around the world. The amateur but extremely accomplished Nonsuch Singers get into the groove very convincingly, inspired no doubt by the expertise of soprano soloist Joanna L'Estrange, a former member of the Swingle Singers, and the superb instrumentalists. Conductor Tom Bullard is another ex-Swingle, and this influence can be felt in arrangements by Ward Swingle, Alexander L'Estrange and several other composers of standards such as 'Love walked in', 'On a clear day' and 'Back bay shuffle' in addition to the Mass, all given polished performances.

CLARE STEVENS

Horizons – Der Geist weht, wo er will

Singer Pur: Claudia Reinhard (s), Christian Meister, Markus Zapp, Manuel Warwitz (t), Reiner Schneider-Waterberg (bar), Marcus Schmidt (b)

Oehms Classics OC 1714 [64:02]

★★★★



Singer Pur have a reputation for bold programming and for effective educational work.

This, to quote its subtitle, is 'spiritually-inclined vocal music from the cultures of the world', which gives a poorish, if accurate, sense of the range of material presented here. There is work by Palestrina and Bach, but also Mohammed Fairouz and Sandeep Bhagwati, plus the Xhosa traditional *Ndikhokhele Bawo*, which is a brave choice for a German-speaking ensemble. The balance of voices, with tenors fulfilling alto duties, is well-nigh perfect and a close-sounding recording gives the music real intimacy and presence.

BRIAN MORTON

Clive Osgood's Sacred Choral Music

Excelsis, London Mozart Players / Robert Lewis (dir)

Convivium Records CR049

[60:00]

★★★★



Clive Osgood could not wish for better advocates for his music than the excellent Excelsis chamber choir, the London Mozart Players and conductor Robert Lewis, who give polished, expressive performances of his *Dixit Dominus* and a selection of shorter works in this beautifully produced showcase recording. The individual

motets appealed to me more than the six-movement *Dixit Dominus*, in which there seems to be a mismatch between the drama of the text and the playful character of the score, finely crafted though it undoubtedly is. A simple setting of *The peace of God*, in two versions with piano and orchestral accompaniment, is a little gem; Osgood has provided a convincing alternative to the famous Vaughan Williams setting of *Come my way, my truth, my life*; and the collection includes his Advent motet *Alleluia! A new work is come on hand*, which was justifiably shortlisted for the 2016 BBC Radio 3 Carol Competition.
CLARE STEVENS

The Garment of Holiness: Choral and organ music by Iain Quinn

Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge, Shanna Hart and Alexander Goodwin (org) / Sarah MacDonald (dir)

Regent Records REGCD 503

[76:44]

★★★★



Cardiff-born Iain Quinn has been steeped in church music all his life,

having been a chorister at Llandaff Cathedral before undergraduate and postgraduate studies took him to institutions including the Juilliard School, the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale and the University of Durham, followed by an international career as an organist, composer and musicologist.

This CD brings together a large selection of individual pieces, a Mass setting and an evening service, written for a variety of distinguished choirs around the world. Quinn's style

is rich and densely textured and the featured works are of consistently high quality, very well performed on this atmospheric recording – the Mass is particularly impressive. Two organ works, the intriguing *Continuum (N-O-T-R-E-D-A-M-E)* and a spectacular Toccata on 'Victimae Paschali laudes', provide refreshing punctuation.
CLARE STEVENS

Free America! Early Songs of Resistance and Rebellion

Boston Camerata / Anne Azéma (dir)

Harmonia mundi HMM 902628

[59:45]

★★★★



Thomas Paine's 'Liberty Tree', from 1775, is a foundational text

in the history of the early United States, and probably should have come first in this clever mixed bag of republican songs and marches. There are, in addition, works by Jeremiah Ingalls, Andrew Law, William Billings, Otis Sawyer, Daniel Read, Sister Patsy Williamson (oddly the only female selected), Thomas Commuck and Thomas Arne, the last of whom is perhaps the only one more widely known. Paine used an existing English tune, and many of the airs included have a familiar feel, as if 'Yankee Doodle' or something similar were about to spring up. The singing and playing – on strings, flutes, fifes and percussion – are plain but not raucous and the sound nicely naturalistic, as if we really were in a meeting hall. An intriguing record to be hearing as America decides whether to impeach a president.

BRIAN MORTON

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◀ **Land of Dreams**

Choir of Trinity College,
Melbourne / Christopher
Watson (dir)

Acis Productions APLI 445 [63:47]

★★★★★



The 16th-century
Robert White's
four settings of the
Compline hymn

'Christe qui lux es et dies' provide a framework for this sequence of 21st-century a cappella works on the theme of sleep and dreaming, inspired by the 'Dreamtime' of Australia's indigenous peoples and their belief in 'songlines' that connect sacred places across their vast land. Christopher Watson brought his Australian choir to St John the Evangelist Church, Oxford, for the recording, and his accomplished young singers respond magnificently to its spacious acoustics and their conductor's unfussy direction. Everything is beautifully balanced, tuned and articulated. The centrepiece is *Mass of the Dreaming* by Ross Edwards, intentionally Australian in its idiom; the CD also includes works by David Bednall, Daniel Brinsmead, Daniel Riley, Eriks Ešēnvalds and Alice Chance. I loved it all.

CLARE STEVENS

Brahms: A German Requiem (1871 London Version)

Michelle Areyzaga (s), Hugh Russell (bar), Bella Voce, Madeline Slettedahl & Craig Terry (pno duet) / Andrew Lewis (dir)

Naxos 8.573952 [65:56]

★★★★★



A rare commercial recording of the Brahms Requiem with the composer's own piano duet

accompaniment, sung in a revised version of the English translation which he authorised, should be a welcome addition to the catalogue; but I'm afraid this isn't the one for me. Chicago-based professional choir Bella Voce prides itself on its English cathedral-style clean sound, but in the first two movements this means they are not well balanced with the overly dominant piano duet, which for me lacks both warmth and momentum; and their diction is not always clear. Baritone soloist Hugh Russell is the star of the disc, declaiming the text with clarity and passion, and inspiring the choir to match him in the third and fifth movements.

CLARE STEVENS

Gate of Heaven

Choir of St James Cathedral, Toronto, Nick Veltmeyer (org), Clare Pellerin (vn), Timothy Francom (tub. bells) / Robert Busiakiewicz (dir)

No catalogue number;
www.stjamescathedral.ca [52:30]

★★★★★



The 19 professional singers in this choir have a rich, flexible sound that enables them

to characterise the different works in this imaginative sequence inspired by the church's year very skilfully, although not always quite as beautifully as one might like. Repertoire includes an effective Kyrie from the *Messe aux sons des cloches* by Bernat Vivancos, scored for 10 voice parts, tubular bells and tam-tams; several works by Healey Willan, who was precentor of St Mary Magdalene Church, Toronto, 1921-68; the Sanctus and Benedictus from Cipriano de Rore's *Missa Praeter rerum*

▶



▲ On top form: the Choir of St John's College, Cambridge

Magnificat

Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, Glen Dempsey (org) / Andrew Nethsingha (dir)

Signum Records SIGCD 588 [58:44]

★★★★★



This recording celebrates the special qualities of the Evening Canticles of Magnificat and Nunc dimittis through six contrasting settings, from Stanford to Gabriel Jackson, all of which hold some personal significance for Andrew Nethsingha. Starting with a noble account of Stanford's *Mag & Nunc in A*, Nethsingha and his St John's forces lead us through a fascinating hour's music, not least for recognising how different each composer's response to the same text can be.

'A fascinating hour's music'

The other settings are by Leighton (a particularly satisfying composition), Sumsion, Howells, Gabriel Jackson and Tippett – the latter's well-known commission from George Guest to celebrate the College's 450th anniversary in 1961. Throughout, the choir is on top form, with an exceptionally clear and forward tone. Former organ scholar Glen Dempsey matches the level of his colleagues' achievements, proving himself to be a subtle and sensitive accompanist. Highly recommended.

PHILIP REED

◀ *seriem*; a short but complex setting of *Qui sine peccato est* by Gareth Wilson; and an attractive arrangement of *In dulci jubilo* by director Robert Busiakiewicz, featuring a lovely violin obbligato.

CLARE STEVENS

ORGAN MUSIC

Bálint Karosi: Arabic Suite

Wayne Leupold Editions
WL600312, US\$35.00

Ceremonial Music for Organ bk.2

Robert Gower (ed.)
Oxford University Press, £22.50

Frederick Septimus Kelly: Elegy for String Orchestra

arr. Simon Niemiński
Crescendo Music Publications,
AU\$15.00

Peter Planyavsky: Partita 'Die Nacht ist vorgedrungen'

Doblinger 02484, £13.50

Bálint Karosi is noted as an improviser as well as performer, and this virtuosic and flamboyant **Arabic Suite**, based on Turkish and Arabic music, bears many hallmarks of extemporisation, not least in its episodic construction. There

are three movements: the first is a representation of the Islamic call to worship; the second is inspired by music improvised to accompany Dervish rituals; the third, to paraphrase the composer, represents a mystical spiritual ascent achieved by abandonment of the ego, which seems a modest enough ambition for an organ piece. It's virtuosic and mercurial music, characterised by constantly changing textures and moods, sometimes percussive, sometimes lyrical. On the stipulated large instrument and in the suggested generous acoustics it will provide a vivid aural experience, even if it's not always formally convincing, especially in the last movement. There are some slightly ambiguous notational devices – what exactly does the tremolo sign mean? – which might usefully have been elucidated in the prefatory note.

Robert Gower takes a broad view of the term 'ceremonial' in **Ceremonial Music for Organ**, and his clear-sighted and thoughtful preface is worth reading – it's an admirable manifesto for any liturgical organist. Gower's aim has been to facilitate what he describes as the 'sizeable responsibility' of choosing suitable repertoire for significant occasions, and interspersed among a small number of fairly familiar works by Bach, Elgar, John Cook and Gigout there are rarities by York Bowen (a Wedding March), Jongen, Kodály, and many others – it's a bit of a treasure trove. Transcriptions (whether by Robert Gower or others) are unfailingly musicianly, and there's more sound good sense on this particular subject in the preface. The overall impression is of a collection which may

well provide just the right piece for the occasion, even if it's not the piece one first expected to choose – highly recommended, and it's going to live permanently in this reviewer's own organ loft.

Kelly's **Elegy for String Orchestra** may also find a ceremonial use, particularly around Remembrance Day – the work was composed as a memorial to Rupert Brooke, and the composer was himself killed in action in the Somme shortly after completing the work. It juxtaposes chorale-like triadic progressions – some may hear in them resonances of the RVW *Tallis Fantasia* – against more animated figuration, and will make an effective addition to this particular repertoire niche. The middle section has some slightly tricky moments, but the transcription is eminently workable.

Planyavsky's characterful **Partita 'Die Nacht ist vorgedrungen'** is intended for liturgical use in Advent – two movements to be played on each of the first three Sundays in the season, and the whole work on the fourth. The piece offers some interesting textures and sonorities, not least in suggesting the use of gongs for the last variation (a shame the German rubric is left untranslated here while the preface provides English). Despite its avowed liturgical function, the piece would make a good concert item on an instrument of neo-classical design – Quintadenas and Sesquialteras are *de rigueur*. While not overtly difficult, it needs a neat technique, and good control of articulation and note releases – it's not music for players who eschew the meticulous, and choral textures need careful deciphering.

STEPHEN FARR

CHORAL MUSIC

The Oxford Book of Flexible Choral Songs

Alan Bullard (ed.)
Oxford University Press
ISBN 978-019-352564-1, p/b,
280pp, £20.95



Over the past decade and more, composers – and particularly arrangers – have been busy

addressing the new reality in many of our adult mixed voice choirs. Often women vastly outnumber men, and of those men very few are tenors. Much of this musical activity has focused on sacred music, and much of that has been a matter of recasting existing 4-part music into SABar arrangements. However skilful the reworking, one is frequently left with the disappointing impression that something is missing.

So OUP's newest collection, *The Oxford Book of Flexible Choral Songs*, is doubly welcomed. First, it is a secular collection aimed at groups large and small that do not (always or ever) have the full four-voice complement. Secondly, almost all the pieces in the volume were expressly written so that they could be performed in several different ways, depending on the singers available. Hardly any of the items were originally SATB compositions, presented here with something taken away; and those pieces that are arrangements generally began life as unison or 2-part songs to which another part or parts have been added.

If all this sounds rather arbitrary, it is greatly to the credit of compiler Alan Bullard that the vast majority of the pieces



in this volume really do succeed however you perform them. Bullard features prominently as composer, arranger and editor: I can think of no one better suited to the task of assembling this anthology.

The presentation is very clear, the volume is well-bound, so shouldn't easily fall apart, and features 51 musical items from 34 contributors. From yesteryear there are pieces by Dowland, Vaughan Williams, Grieg, Schubert, Walton and Stanford. Contemporary composers and arrangers include Will Todd, Oliver Tarney, Ben Parry, Toby Young, John Rutter and Bob Chilcott.

Wearing my musical director's hat, I would be unlikely to choose an entire programme from this collection. There are no really substantial pieces here; this is a very 'English' compilation – only a handful of pieces can be sung in any other language, and only 12 are genuinely up-tempo pieces. *Moderato* can become a turn-off if there is too much of it about.

Having said all that, this is a really useful compilation featuring some truly accomplished writing. I was one of the first to conduct Will Todd's *All Will Be Well* at the 24-hour 'Requiem to Cancer' singathon in 2018. Its simple message is delivered with just the right amount of true emotion. In *Chimes*, Oliver Tarney has taken his cue from an exceptionally vivid text by Alice Meynell – 'a flock of bells take flight' – and produced a lovely, brooding song with a *perpetuum mobile* piano accompaniment. *Eletelephony* (Ben Parry) will be enjoyed by those who like playing with words, while Alison Willis's *My Boy Jack* perfectly captures a mother's fear for her

sailor-son's safety out on a rough sea. Alan Bullard makes a very important contribution as a composer. His setting of Blake's famous *The Tiger* is vigorously dramatic, and *Tread Softly* (W.B. Yeats) is tender and atmospheric. Perhaps Bullard's best – and most useful – contribution is his *Three Shakespeare Songs* which, taken together, might form the centrepiece of a programme. They are inventive, colourful, witty – and fun.

JEREMY JACKMAN

Noel Rawsthorne: *Sing for Fun!*

Unison & pno
Banks Music Publications
BMP015, £3.50

Christopher Field: *A Counting-Out Song*

Two-part & pno
Banks Music Publications ECS592,
£1.95

Christopher Field: *The Late Express*

Two-part & pno
Banks Music Publications ECS593,
£1.95

Sarah Quartel: *My soul is awakened*

SSAA & pno
Oxford University Press 987-19-
353021-4, £2.95

Young children can decide early on in their school lives if they 'like singing' or not, which is often based on what choral repertoire they have experienced. Consequently, our choice of material can sometimes feel daunting. Kodály wrote extensively about the selection of suitable repertoire for young children and in his *Let us sing correctly*, edited by Percy Young and published by Boosey & Hawkes,



SANDRA DUFFON PHOTOGRAPHY

▲ Sarah Quartel 'explores the full vocal range'

he suggests that 'correct unison singing can, paradoxically, be learned only by singing in two parts: the voices adjust and balance each other' (p.2). Whatever approach one takes when selecting repertoire for children, I suggest a variety of good music that features both unison and part-singing – it is also essential that you love the music yourself!

If looking for some unison songs for class singing, the late Noel Rawsthorne's *Sing for Fun!* collection is exactly what the cover says. The eight unison songs, with piano accompaniment and texts by Peter Kennerley, have something for every time of the year and cover moments in a young child's experience of life. For example, 'Celebration' focuses on the end of the school year with the sadness of parting but also

celebrating friendships that last a lifetime. Also, in a rousing song 'Sausages and Hot Baked Beans', children have the opportunity to explore the excitement that lunchtime can bring. Always beautifully melodic, these are songs that will be easily learnt and affectionately remembered by young children.

Further sound repertoire for young children which includes both unison and part-singing is found in Christopher Field's *Counting-Out Song*. Based on the 'Eeny, meeny, miney, mo' traditional children's counting-out rhyme and with words (slightly adapted) by Rudyard Kipling, it gives opportunities for the singers to tell the historic story in a dramatic way with the need for lively rhythmic singing, sometimes with a boogie-woogie bass line in the piano accompaniment. ▶

CHORAL SELECTION



Works for SATB by Julian Marshall, Ohad Stolarz, Owain Park and Michael Zev Gordon

Forgive me if, in this article, I take a slightly elastic view about the meaning of the word 'new', as in the 'new music' I am supposed to review. A work written in 2009 and published in 2015 landed on my mat last week. So, Julian Marshall's **Out of the Darkness** (M-sol, SATB, 2vc; Novello NOV 166254, £5.99) is new to me, and that will have to do, since I feel I must say something about this piece. It is an extended work in seven movements lasting about 40 minutes, to words by the Jewish-German poet Gertrud Kolmar. Her growing reputation in the 1930s did not save her from Nazi persecution, and she died on the way to Auschwitz in 1943. Marshall uses mostly an excellent English translation by Brigitte M. Goldstein, although some lines are in German, and one movement uses an unrelated Spanish text. I can quite understand why the composer was so powerfully affected by Kolmar's verse, and his musical response is so emotionally hand-in-glove that they might have been sitting together working on the piece.

If the scoring is unusual, it works perfectly. The expressive heartbeat of the piece tends to be found in the music for the two cellos (the players will need to be of professional standard), while the tonality of the vocal parts takes its cue from the added-note chords of Latin dance music of the 1930s and 40s. The mezzo-soprano solo lines are more lyrical, but all singers will need a very accurate sense of both pitch and rhythm to bring this work off. There is considerable use of *ostinato* throughout: far from persuading the music to sit down, it helps to propel the music forwards and produces a tension the music might otherwise lack. There is a recording on the MMG label (MMC 101) and I urge you to listen to it to see if this work might be for you. I think it is the best substantial piece of vocal music I have seen this year.

Sephardic Jews are those who were originally expelled from Spain at the end of the 15th century and resettled in the Mediterranean

and the Balkans. Over time they created their own dialect – Ladino – which is the language of the folksongs they took with them to their new domiciles. The Hebrew composer-conductor Ohad Stolarz has produced a set of eight relatively simple arrangements of **Sephardic Folk Songs** (SATB unacc; Breitkopf & Härtel ChB 5364, €17.00). These are mostly strophic items, so the music should be easily learned. The melodies are often quirky, the vocal ranges are unchallenging and there is plenty of material at the back of the volume to help with translation and pronunciation. A group of these a cappella pieces in a concert would be a most attractive proposition.

I like Owain Park's **Preces and Responses** (SATB unacc; Novello NOV 297458, £2.25), written for Trinity College, Cambridge. The interplay between the cantor's versicles (not the usual ones, but not difficult) and the choral responses is suitably conversational, and the latter are not grandiose as in some recent settings. They are bound together by the use of repeated musical ideas through the set, and brought to a most satisfactory conclusion in the last 'amen'.

Little text across 130 bars creates a delicious sense of luxurious extension in *These Carols*

Michael Zev Gordon has created a nicely judged part-song to a very few words by Walt Whitman in **These Carols** (nothing to do with Christmas) (SATB unacc; Cadenza CAZMZGTB 01, £2.99). We graduate from unison to 2-part and finally to 4-part polyphony, punctuated by tiny moments of homophony. So little text across 130 bars creates a delicious sense of luxurious extension. The musical lines are not difficult, and the piece should be well within the capabilities of the average 4-part choir.

After an early career as a freelance choral director and counter-tenor, Jeremy Jackman was a member of the King's Singers for ten years. In 1990 he resumed a career in conducting and leading workshops. He is currently musical director of the English Baroque Choir, and the Cecilian Singers in Leicester. www.jeremyjackman.co.uk

▼ The Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, for whom Owain Park wrote his *Preces and Responses*



BENJAMIN BALOVEGA

◀ Another piece by Christopher Field is **The Late Express**, which presents the story of a station master, Willie Watson, who was sacked because of his lateness and then 'pined away and died'. Not a cheerful tale, but one to be sung 'with rhythmic precision and relentless spookiness', featuring some very effective two-part writing. The dynamics are refreshingly wide-ranging and give the singers opportunities to explore the effects of using their voices below and beyond *mezzo piano*. This would be an ideal short piece for a sound treble choir seeking a challenge that will be vocally satisfying to perform.

Working with older children and young adults still requires a range of material in order to keep the students musically curious. Sarah Quartel's **My soul is awakened** is an exciting new piece for upper voices. It is based on the glorious text by Emily Brontë, which captures the imagery of the powerful natural world in a positive tone: 'The dead leaves beneath them are merrily dancing', for example. I was drawn to the quality of the piano accompaniment, with its sometimes cross-rhythms against the melody, which gently supports yet does not overly cover the 4-part writing ranging from F below middle C to top A flat. When working with young female voices, I seek out repertoire that gives them the opportunity to explore the full vocal range. Of course, some young choirs may not have so many 'low' voices, so this is more suitable for an experienced upper voice ensemble. The piece is over four minutes long, which I consider a bonus for a competent choir in that they have a substantial composition to programme. The composer

indicates at the beginning that the performance should be 'fresh and buoyant', which I think this excellent setting really is, in a very sophisticated way.

JOY HILL

Handel: Messiah 1741

Malcolm Bruno & Caroline Ritchie (eds.)

SATB sols, SATB chorus & orch.
Breitkopf & Härtel, full soft-bound
score 5560, €84.53



I've been using the Watkins Shaw edition of *Messiah* for so much of my life that it has only rarely occurred to me to look elsewhere. I first used Watkins Shaw not long after the 1981 revision was published, and my weathered Novello vocal score is still completely intact. Before I was born, the original 1959 Watkins Shaw edition had helped to change the way in which *Messiah* was performed, although 1959 was an *annus perplexus* for *Messiah*, since it also witnessed the first performance and subsequent recording of Sir Eugene Goossens's large-scale orchestration for the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham. Chalk and cheese. In the 19th century, Mozart's orchestration ruled supreme (published by Breitkopf in 1802) – good news for flautists, clarinetists, trombonists, and French horn players. Exactly a century later, Breitkopf published Friedrich Chrysander's celebrated edition of *Messiah*. And now, well over a century on from that, Breitkopf is at it again.

The new Breitkopf & Härtel *Urtext* edition offers the text in English (roman type) and German (italic). The

German words are those of a 1780 translation by the poet-theologian Johann Herder, although *Messiah* had first been heard in German five years earlier under the direction of C.P.E. Bach (fetch me the time-machine). Herder's German translation is fascinating because it attempts to reflect the sentiment and meaning of the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Bible, rather than to fit the words of the Lutheran Bible to Handel's vocal lines. Throughout this new edition, creative yet pragmatic scholarship shines through, and the Preface (German and English) and Critical Report (English only) are thorough and unusually fascinating.

To deal with specifics: you won't find Watkins Shaw's editorial rhythmic suggestions above the stave, but there are a couple of paragraphs in the Preface about 'rhythmic alteration'. You don't have to use oboes and bassoons if you don't want to, although newly reconstructed wind parts are available if you need them. 'Rejoyce (*sic*) greatly' appears in the main body of the score in compound time, but you can use the Appendix for the version that you know. Another big difference is the bass version of 'But who may abide' with its different melody, and the 'Refiner's fire' remaining in *larghetto* triple time (the familiar alto version is in the Appendix). Gratifyingly, for 'He shall feed His flock' you have the options of the alto-only version, or soprano-only, or the (in my opinion, majestic) version where the soprano cruises in halfway through. The word 'Surely' is given unequivocally as two syllables rather than three ('Sur-e-ly', as footnoted

in Watkins Shaw). The bars are twice as long as you may be used to in 'And with His stripes' (helpful in one way, unhelpful in another) and also at the end of 'All we, like sheep' (this is monumentally helpful). The double dots are gone in 'The Lord gave the Word'; but most interesting of all, this edition presents a version of 'Thou art gone up on high' not for alto or soprano, but for bass with some of the more difficult passage-work simplified – no sniggering. The alto version appears in the Appendix, but the soprano loses out here.

It's impossible to communicate just how much there is to learn about the 1741 genesis of *Messiah* from this new edition. Malcolm Bruno and Caroline Ritchie have put their hearts and minds into this project. Whether it will replace the edition that you already use depends on the mindset of your audience and the depth of your pocket. I'm very happy to own the *Messiah 1741* full score, and if I were starting out now, I'd invest in the whole kit and caboodle.

JEREMY SUMMERLY

BOOKS

Christmas Eve at King's: 100 Years of Nine Lessons & Carols

Timothy Rogers

Encore Publications 2019, ISBN 978-1-5272-4725-3, 60pp., £9.99



This modest-looking publication belies its contents: namely, a wealth of information

concerning the repertoire of the celebrated service of Nine

►

◀ Lessons and Carols from King's College, Cambridge, which reached its centenary in December 2018. Compiler Timothy Rogers has thoroughly digested the annual Christmas Eve service sheets in the King's archive and presented the results as clearly as possible. Thus, we can see at a glance that while the processional hymn has always been *Once in Royal David's City*,

different in approach as Judith Weir (twice commissioned), John Rutter, Tansy Davies, Thomas Adès and Huw Watkins.

Rogers contextualises his volume with an introductory essay that analyses some of the recurring patterns as well as differences that have emerged down the years, and touches on the differing attitudes of the directors of music. For example,

Rogers's digest does much to reveal how Stephen Cleobury broadened the repertoire of the service

Rogers's research is detailed enough for us to learn, for example, that it was not until 1970 that it was given in David Willcocks's arrangement. Similarly, we can observe that there were traditions surrounding the choice of invitational carol following the bidding prayer until 1974, when the newly appointed director of music Philip Ledger broke free, as it were, of previous directors' limited options, from which time he and his successor, Stephen Cleobury, were far more varied in their choices.

Recently retired, Stephen Cleobury is the longest-serving director of music at King's, and Rogers's digest does much to reveal how he has broadened the repertoire of the service. From the outset of his tenure, he has used the occasion as an opportunity to commission a carol from leading, mostly British, composers. Rogers helpfully gives the commissioned carols an independent list. It's good to be reminded that Lennox Berkeley fulfilled the first commission, in 1983, with his *In Wintertime*, and the roster includes figures as

it's of interest to learn that Willcocks's annotated service sheets show his concern for the quality of the readers as well as the music.

A better proof-read would have erased some obvious typos: for example, Judith Weir's first King's commission is entitled *Illuminare, Jerusalem* (not *Illiminare*); it's Dominic (not Donimic) Muldowney; and a lack of accents in foreign-language titles is questionable. Equally unhelpful to the reader of the Introduction is the non-use of italics (or even single quotations) for carol titles, whose inclusion would have been a distinct improvement.

But setting aside such irritations, any musician who loves the King's Christmas Eve service will find in this book things to intrigue and in which to delight.

PHILIP REED

A New Heaven: Harry Christophers and The Sixteen – Choral Conversations with Sara Mohr-Pietsch

Faber & Faber ISBN 978-0-571-34852-7, h/b, 207pp, £16.99



Time was when Oxbridge students (often organists) obsessed with early choral repertoire could simply decide that they wanted to form a classy vocal ensemble and then learn how to direct it afterwards. Numerous groups emerged and some, like The Sixteen, are still going strong, 40 years on. Those times will not come again, and the path to glory in this increasingly professional, demanding and specialised field is now spread with hurdles; so it is young conductors who might be the greatest beneficiaries of parts of this brief, easy-to-read book, discovering not only how Harry Christophers began his celebrated group via training as a chorister, but also learning about his personal approach to the preparation of programmes and the architecture of individual works. There is a particularly engaging discourse on Handel's *Messiah* relating to Christophers's appointment as director of the Handel & Haydn Society of Boston, setting him among conductors of today who eschew stodgy tradition for its own sake.

His interaction with singers, by contrast with some (in)famous directors, is based on positivity and affability: indeed, celebrated alumnus Christopher Purves, returning to speak to the aspiring youngsters of Genesis Sixteen, described membership of the group as being about 'fun, friendship and forgiveness'. They say he has no ego and that this is a major key to the loyalty of his team. Reading this narrative, one might assume that there have been few vicissitudes until one learns of the £40,000 loss incurred by an American tour, leading eventually to a deficit of £100,000. Running a

professional vocal group is like chucking bundles of £50 notes on the fire, so how did they survive and continue to thrive? There's a frustrating lack of detail here, apart from a tribute to their celebrated 'angel', the wealthy investment banker and philanthropist John Studzinski and his Genesis Foundation. His support for commissions and the Genesis Sixteen training programme is clearly crucial.

Christophers acknowledges the element of being in the right place at the right time that has benefited the group; but it's about what you do with those opportunities, and he has not wasted them. Mohr-Pietsch calls Christophers 'a reluctant businessman', but there's no denying that he has built a cast-iron brand with canny marketing. Looking beyond the somewhat starry-eyed prose of Ms Mohr-Pietsch (did we really need to know that the raised arms of her new baby made her think about conducting?), one finds insights from Christophers and his singing colleagues in their authentic words that will be lapped up by their many fans and aspiring amateur choral singers.

REBECCA TAVENER

▼ In the right place at the right time: Harry Christophers



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ENCOUNTERS

ANDREW CARTER, COMPOSER



COURTESY ANDREW CARTER

“I come from a family of change-ringers and my mother had a good voice. My introduction to music was through school choirs, particularly at my co-educational Leicestershire grammar school, where the head of music, Terry Dwyer, used to put on Mozart operas and Bach cantatas. As a 16-year-old baritone I found myself singing Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, and at 17 I sang the solos in *Wachet auf*.

I went to Leeds University and it was a great experience. I joined lots of university choirs and sang works such as the B minor Mass and the Bach Passions. Donald Hunt gave me organ lessons at the parish church for a year, and I learned enough to be able to write effectively for the instrument.

I'd been crazy about York Minster ever since listening to broadcasts of Choral Evensong on my old Bakelite radio at home in Leicester. A schoolfriend and I used to do cathedral pilgrimages by bike; we did one trip up to Durham (where we were given a tour of Harrison & Harrison's workshops by Cuthbert Harrison), then down the A1 to Ripon and over to York. We were shown up to the organ loft, where Francis Jackson was playing the last movement of Mendelssohn's Sonata no.3; astonishingly, he talked to us throughout, while his hands and feet glided effortlessly over the manuals and pedals.

On graduating, I heard there was a bass songman vacancy in the Minster choir, so I wrote to Francis to apply. Those were fabulous days; Francis was a wonderful role model. The Minster repertoire list was large, ranging from the 16th century to Tippett, Britten and Rubbra. I spent my first two years sight-reading or taking things home to learn.

In 1965 I founded the Chapter House Choir, which I conducted for 17 years. We explored all the usual choral repertoire, up to Poulenc and Messiaen, which we thought was very advanced. The most challenging piece we tackled was Messiaen's *Cinq rechants* for 12 unaccompanied voices – but I think we did it pretty well. To help keep up the standard, we entered competitions such as BBC Radio's *Let the peoples sing*. I stood down when I felt I was beginning to repeat myself, and I was afraid people would stop listening!

By that time, with the support of my wife Sylvia, a pianist and music teacher, I'd given up my teaching job to focus on composing. Marrying Sylvia was undoubtedly the most important highlight of my life; we have had a wonderful life together with our two children.

A major turning point for me was Philip Ledger's inclusion of my carol “A Maiden Most Gentle” in the 1978 Christmas Eve service from King's College, Cambridge. Commissions immediately started coming in, which made a huge difference to my life. Philip was also the catalyst for my first and best-known cantata, *Benedicite*. Another highlight was the invitation from John Scott at St Paul's Cathedral to write the *Missa Sancti Pauli* to celebrate the tercentenary of Wren's cathedral in 1997. It was astonishing to sit under the dome in the Grinling Gibbons choir stalls, listening to my music.

Early on, I realised I wouldn't earn much by waiting for commissions from British choirs. American choirs have so much get-up-and-go and are quite happy to say, “Let's commission so-and-so.” Bob Hobby, at Holy Trinity, Fort Wayne, Indiana, commissioned both my *Te Deum* and the organ concerto.

I've been impressed by the achievements of Francis's successors at the Minster, Philip Moore and Robert Sharpe. In the 1960s, we thought this set-up couldn't survive much longer, it was far too expensive – but cathedral choirs in York and elsewhere are still going strong, many now with the addition of girls, which I welcome. Having taught in a girls' school, I know they can be trained to sing in exactly the same way as boys.

I admit that I'm conservative in my musical tastes. I pushed my boundaries a bit for *No man is an island*, written for Tim Brown and the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, when our daughter Elinor was a member; but on the whole I've stayed where I'm comfortable. Others must do what is right for them. ■

Andrew Carter, who was talking to Clare Stevens, turns 80 on 13 December. Organist Gordon Stewart with Tom Osbourne (trumpet) and Elinor Carter (soprano) give a celebratory recital in Huddersfield Town Hall on Monday 2 December at 1pm; tickets 01484 225755.



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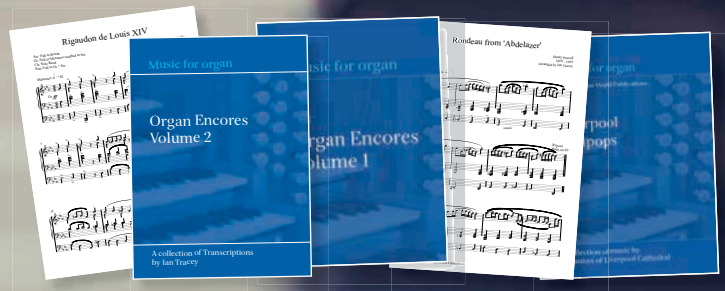
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